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Welcome,

Going on holiday with your dog could be the best thing you do this year, so if you haven't started making plans yet, now is the time!

New places and activities to experience and explore, lots of fresh air, fun, and healthy exercise, and one-to-one time with your canine best friend all add up to a memorable break — a time when you can build the bonds between you and return home feeling relaxed and invigorated!

This issue, we have lots to help make the task of holiday planning easier. For starters, if you'd really like to get back in touch with nature, have you considered camping, glamping, or caravanning? Check out six dog-friendly sites we've discovered around the country on page 16.

Our 'Holiday homework' feature (page 43) focuses on preparation because it's vital when planning a holiday with your dog. Time to do your research; check out locations, what kind of accommodation, attractions, and facilities are available for dogs, as well as what type of holidays are offered. There's lots of advice to ensure that both you and your pet get the most out of your time away.

We also have a new series starting this month (page 30) featuring some of the UK's best and most spectacular walks. We visit the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland, which not only offers stunning landscapes, majestic mountains, and wild moors, but lots to do and see, making it very popular with holidaymakers and their dogs.

If holidaying isn't going to be your thing this year, there are still plenty of topical articles in this issue of Your Dog. Our lead feature 'Charities in crisis' (page 12) takes a look at the current state of UK rescue and talks to some of the people at the sharp end, dealing with the challenges that confront the rescue sector. There's also advice on how you can help the charities at what is a very difficult time.

Until next month,

Sarah Wright
Editor

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OBEDIENCE AND RALLY

Cover pic: Labrador
by Mark Taylor,
Warren Photographic Ltd.

Labrador Bruce is nearly two-and-a-half now, but was just 10 weeks old when our cover pic was taken. Owned by John and Jane Hamer, from Chiddingfold, Surrey, Bruce's favourite things in life include food, balls, and chasing squirrels, but he dislikes cold showers (in other words the garden hose). "Bruce also loves our grandson Luca, who is 18 months old," says Jane. "We refer to Luca as Bruce's nephew — and he's Duncle Bruce (dog uncle)!"

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The best therapist has fur and four legs."

Anonymous.

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Discover what's inside this month...

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Talking dogs

News. Chat. Interviews. Pictures. Competitions.

30 NOT OUT — BOBI DECLARED WORLD'S OLDEST DOG!

Aged an amazing 30 years and 266 days, as of February 1, Bobi from Portugal has been named the world's oldest dog by Guinness World Records.

The Rafeiro do Alentejo, a Portuguese guarding breed, has not only broken the record as the oldest living dog, but is the oldest ever. Bobi's age has been verified by his local vet's and a pet database authorised by the Portuguese Government and a national veterinary body.

Owner Leonel Costa was eight years old when Bobi was born on May 11, 1992, on the family farm in the village of Conqueiros.

According to Leonel, his calm and sociable dog loves being petted and enjoys playing with the four cats he lives with. The family believes the secret to Bobi's long life is the fact he has always lived in the countryside in a peaceful environment, surrounded by nature.

Apparently, Bobi loves to eat, wander around the farmland and pine trees, and relax by the fire on cold days.

Describing his dog as "one of a kind", who reminds him of his childhood and family members who have passed away, Leonel explained: "Bobi has been a warrior for all these years, and only he knows how he's been holding on. It must not be easy because the average dog's lifespan is not that high, and if he spoke, only he could explain this success.

"We are very happy and grateful, after 30 years, to have Bobi in our daily lives."

Bobi has surpassed the age of the previous oldest living dog, Spike, by more than SEVEN years. The Chihuahua-cross, from Ohio, America, was verified as 23 years and seven days on December 7, 2022.

Meanwhile, Bluey, an Australian Cattle Dog, formerly held the record as the oldest dog ever. He was put to sleep in November 1939, aged 29 years and five months.

Right: Bobi with his Guinness World Records certificate.
Image: Guinness World Records.

Far right: Bobi enjoys playing with the farm cats.
Image: Guinness World Records.

DOG DATA
Dog training app Woofz has found pulling on the lead to be the biggest problem its global users face with their dogs (22.5 per cent).

CHARITY GIVES SNIPER THEIR BEST SHOT

The team at a West African-based animal charity pulled out all the stops to save a brave and friendly little dog with an injury so horrific, they feared she wouldn't survive.

Sniper was rushed into The Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust's veterinary centre suffering from a serious machete wound, which had displaced a huge fragment of her skull, causing bleeding into her eye. With the injury just above and between her eyes and so close to her brain, it really was touch and go whether she would pull through.

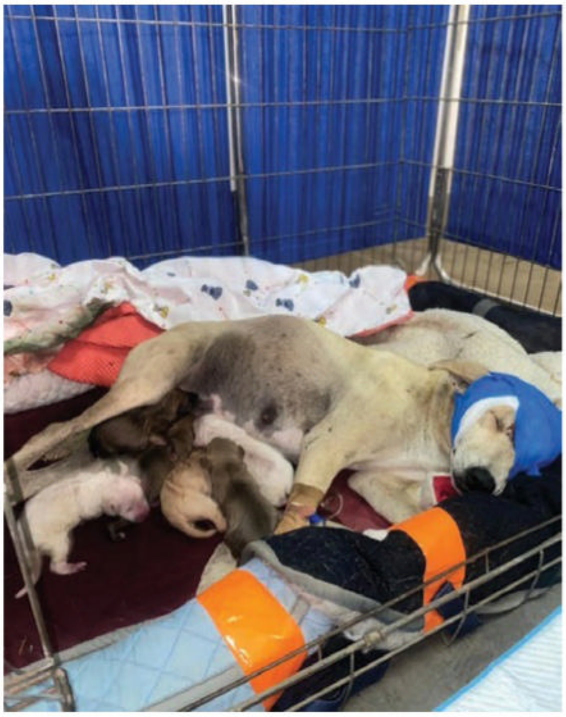
To make matters worse, Sniper was also extremely dehydrated and lethargic — and heavily pregnant.

"We honestly didn't know if we would be able to save her life, but we did everything we could to try," explained Emily Elgar, a long-term volunteer at the trust.

"She is such a sweet-natured dog. Throughout every second of her examinations, treatments, and wound dressings, she has never shown an ounce of aggression."

Just 24 hours later, Sniper gave birth to seven healthy puppies, and it looks like she will make a full recovery — against all the odds.

● To support this small UK-registered charity, which works to improve the health, welfare, and productivity of all animals in The Gambia, visit www.justgiving.com/ghdt or www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk



Right: Sniper with her horrific head wound bandaged gave birth to seven puppies.

BRAVE BASS'S HEROISM HONOURED

A retired US Marine Corps dog has been awarded the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross for his bravery and life-saving devotion to duty in Afghanistan.

Multi-purpose canine Bass, who lives in San Antonio, Texas, with his former handler, Staff Sergeant Alex Schnell, was presented with the prestigious PDSA Dickin Medal — the highest honour available to animals — following his six-year service in the US Marine Special Operation Command (MARSOC).

During his career, the 10-year-old Belgian Malinois conducted more than 350 explosive sweeps and 46 high-value missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. In May 2019, he prevented additional loss of life by identifying five explosive devices during a night-time, air-borne raid targeting a Taliban bomb-maker in Helmand Province.

"Bass's life-saving actions on that night make him a truly deserving recipient of the PDSA Dickin Medal," said Jan McLoughlin, director general of the UK's largest veterinary charity.

Bass's handler, Alex, added: "We are all incredibly proud that PDSA has recognised Bass in this way."

Above right: Bass and Staff Sergeant Alex Schnell.

Right: Bass — the 75th recipient of the PDSA Dickin Medal.

News Hound-up

Above: The Dorset Search Dogs.

Below: Sign up your senior pets.

CANINE CHARITIES TO BENEFIT FROM GENEROUS DONATION

The Dorwest Herbs Foundation has donated £6,000 to a further five animal charities.

Launched in 2018, the foundation helps dogs and cats in need of care, health, and quality of life improvement, as well as trained assistance, rescue, and medical support dogs.

The herbal pet-care experts donate 10 per cent of profit from every sale of their special Foundation products, Keeper's Mix and Keeper's Mix Sensitive.

This year, the charities that will benefit are Dorset Search Dogs (pictured), Lucky's Legacy Rescue, Dogs On The Streets (DOTS), Forever Hounds Trust, and The Cinnamon Trust.

● **For more information on the Dorwest Foundation, visit www.dorwest.com/foundation**

NEW CLUB FOR OLDER CANINES

A club has been launched to support dogs in their twilight years by tackling the rise in avoidable age-related issues.

Members of pet food brand Vet's Kitchen Senior Dog Club will receive a senior dog pass, a bag of senior dog food, special discounts and promotions, and a quarterly newsletter with tips and advice for providing older dogs with the best care.

The club is aimed at the 40 per cent of the estimated 9.6 million UK pet dog population aged over seven — the equivalent of 65 in human years, depending on the breed.

● **Sign up your dog at www.vetskitchen.co.uk/pages/senior-dogs-club**

SMART MOVES

The Border Collie has the highest working and obedience intelligence, while the Labrador scores the lowest in terms of problem solving and inhibitory control, according to a study by the University of Helsinki in Finland.

Scientists put more than 1,000 dogs through 10 'smartDOG' intelligence tests to assess the performance of 13 breeds. The research examined exploratory behaviour, impulsivity, social cognition, spatial problem solving, logical reasoning, and short-term memory.

The Poodle, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever, Dobermann, Shetland Sheepdog, and Labrador also scored highly in the working and obedience intelligence tests.

The study's co-author Saara Junttila hopes that the results may one day help in the selection of breeds for specific tasks.

GOLD STANDARD!

Norfolk-based animal nutritional supplement company Aviform is celebrating after winning the prestigious Feefo Gold Trusted Service Award.

Working with more than 6,000 brands, Feefo is the world's largest provider of verified reviews. Its independent seal of excellence recognises businesses that consistently deliver a world-class customer experience.

Robin Rodger, Aviform managing director, said: "The fact this award is based on feedback from real customers gives us confidence we are providing an exceptional level of service. It also recognises just how hard our staff have worked under fresh challenges of rising inflation and the cost-of-living crisis."

NEW PALM OIL ALERT

Dog owners are being warned to watch out for toxic palm oil, which has washed up at various coastal locations around the UK recently.

Lumps — known as bergs — of the creamy white substance have been found on beaches including Haverigg in Cumbria.

Palm oil, which looks like polystyrene and smells strongly of diesel, can prove fatal if dogs ingest it. If you suspect your dog may have eaten palm oil, take him to the nearest vet immediately.

SNAP HAPPY!

Congratulations to the winners of the prestigious 2022 International Dog Photography Awards.

Attracting more than 1,400 entries from talented professional, amateur, and student dog photographers across 50 countries, this year's competition featured four categories.

Dalia Fichmann's breathtaking image (pictured above) won the portrait and landscape category; Francesco Junior Mura's picture of an in-flight collie was voted the top action shot; Su Kaye's striking black and white image secured the studio category; and Sabrina Theden won the dogs and people award.

1

2

3

Right: Portrait and landscape category...
1. First Dalia Fichmann.
2. Second Sophia Hutchinson.
3. Third Joanne Liu.

GOVERNMENT, VETS, AND THE PUBLIC URGED TO TAKE ACTION FOLLOWING BBC EXPOSÉ

The British Veterinary Association (BVA) has renewed its calls for greater enforcement around irresponsible dog breeding, a clamp down on unregulated canine fertility clinics, and a ban on importing dogs with cropped ears, following two shocking TV documentaries.

The hard-hitting BBC 'Panorama' and 'Disclosure' investigations revealed the links between organised crime and the breeding of dogs with extreme features. BVA senior vice president Justine Shotton said: "This investigation is a wake up call to government to take urgent action." The BVA is urging people to report concerns arounds dogs with cropped ears and unregulated fertility clinics to their local government authority, while a template letter imploring the government to ensure the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill progresses through parliament, can be downloaded at www.bva.co.uk/take-action/kept-animals-bill/ and sent to your MP.

DOG DATA
A survey by ManyPets in partnership with sharing app Olio has revealed nearly half (49 per cent) of owners admit their pet is so pampered, he is head of the household.

BEAUTIFUL — INSIDE AND OUT!

We're not quite sure if we should be saying congratulations or commiserations to Peggy, an endearing cross-breed, who has been crowned the UK's ugliest dog.

Following an extensive search for aesthetically challenged canines, the five-year-old dog has emerged as the clear winner of photography company ParrotPrint.com's nationwide contest.

The runt of an accidental litter, Peggy waited six months before finding her forever home with Holly Middleton, from East Yorkshire.

Now, the Pug X Chinese Crested Dog's hairless body and lolling tongue have not only impressed the judges but captured the hearts of a nation.

"We think Peggy is beautiful, both inside and out, and wouldn't change her for the world," said Holly, whose precious pet enjoyed a pamper session at a luxury canine spa as part of her prize.

"Being part of the ugliest dog competition has been brilliant from start to finish," added Holly. "I hope it encourages people to overlook the little oddities of those dogs left on the shelf."

Right: Peggy with Holly.

World Pupdates

● **AUSTRALIA:** Eve the Kelpie, from the Capree Stud in Newbridge, New South Wales, sold at auction for $49,000 — a record sum for the breed in Australia — and she's not yet two years old.

The well-bred black and tan bitch's bloodline goes back 50 years to some of breeder Chris Stapleton's original dogs. Eve's fit physique, pedigree bloodlines, and unique ability to work with cattle, sheep, and goats attracted buyers, smashing the previous record of $35,200.

Demand for working dogs in Australia has increased post-pandemic due to fewer workers and skills shortages across agriculture.

● **AMERICA:** Eight-year-old Coonhound Dylan survived after being trapped in an 18-inch storm drainpipe without food or water for a week. It took firefighters, police officers, public works employees, electricity workers, local people, and the stricken rescue dog's foster carer several hours to free him from the pipe in Medford Township, New Jersey.

Dylan, who has since found his forever home, was rushed to Mount Laurel Animal Hospital, where he was treated for a 104-degree fever, ticks, and burns to his paws and elbows.

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MATILDA WALTZES BACK TO HEALTH

A tiny puppy left on the brink of death after a dog attack has been saved, thanks to round-the-clock care from a dedicated veterinary team.

Weighing just four kilos, five-month-old Matilda was being walked by her owner, Diane Columbine, in a park in Urmston, Manchester, when she was mauled by a large dog.

The little Wire Fox Terrier suffered paralysed legs, broken ribs piercing her lungs, and a bite wound that pushed a bone fragment into her spinal cord.

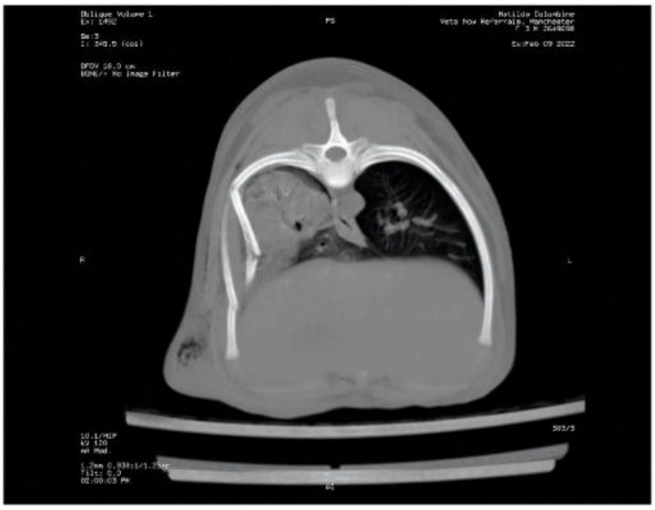
Matilda was rushed to the Vets Now 24-hour pet hospital in Manchester, where the emergency care and surgical teams stabilised her and performed multiple life-saving operations.

Vets Now referral surgeon Paul Aldridge explained: "Poor Matilda suffered some of the worst and most life-threatening injuries I've ever seen in such a small dog."

After 48 hours in intensive care, Matilda spent a further three days recuperating before being allowed home in a brace that supported her back legs.

Diane performed physiotherapy and manipulation every four hours for two weeks, and slowly, the little dog was able to stand.

"I can't thank Paul and his amazing colleagues enough for their dedication and kindness," added Diane, whose brave terrier amazingly has no lasting ill-effects.



Above right: Matilda recovers at Vets Now in Manchester.

Right: Matilda's scan revealed broken ribs and a collapsed lung.

Far right: Matilda with her owner Diane Columbine.

Images: Vets Now.

ROBO-DOG SPOT ON THE TRAIL OF CLIMATE CHANGE

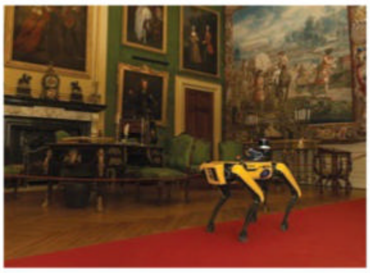
A robotic dog is being used to gather data about species diversity at one of Britain's foremost stately homes.

The Oxford Robotics Institute and Oxford Biology are using robo-dog 'Spot' to test an ecosystem monitoring programme at Oxfordshire's Blenheim Palace, a Unesco World Heritage site.

The two partners are also working to create a 3D digital model of the grand country house linked to climatic, environmental, and building fabric monitoring devices, to help predict the potential impacts of climate change.

With its grand state rooms, countless steps, fields, ancient woodlands, parkland, cafes, and courtyards, Blenheim Palace — the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill — offers the perfect 'living laboratory' for this pilot project.

So far, Spot has been coping well with the palace's challenging and diverse environment.



Above right: So far Spot is coping well with the palace's challenging environment.

Below right: Blenheim's grand state rooms are perfect for the project.

Images: Blenheim Palace.

WORST PLACES FOR POO PENALTIES REVEALED

One in three owners are unaware dog fouling in a public place is breaking the law, according to a study by Comparethemarket's pet insurance team.

Thirty-two per cent of owners hadn't realised they could receive a fixed penalty notice (FPN) of up to £100, or a fine of £1,000 if prosecuted, for not picking up after their dog.

The research revealed Glasgow as the worst place in the UK for dog fouling, with 10,657 complaints reported to the council in the last five years. Northumberland, Manchester, and Belfast also fared badly.

Glasgow again tops the list for the area where owners are most likely to receive an FPN for dog fouling, with 24 per cent of complaints leading to owners receiving a notice — that's an average of 513 FPNs per year. Meanwhile, owners in Barnsley have received the most prosecutions — 70 for dog fouling in the last five years — closely followed by those in Clydach Vale in the Rhondda Valley.

Right: Don't forget to pick up after your pet.

DOG DATA

A study by Bensons for Beds has revealed Cocker Spaniels are the breed most likely to take up space on the bed, followed by Beagles, Miniature Schnauzers, and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels.

TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR PET AS COSTS CONTINUE TO RISE

A leading vet charity is advising on ways to keep dogs fit and healthy during the cost-of-living crisis, after research revealed 30 per cent of owners are worried about paying vets' bills.

The most recent PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report — the longest-running annual survey of pet well-being in the UK — also highlighted that 39 per cent of dogs are currently uninsured. PDSA vet nurse Nina Downing explained: "One of the best ways to safeguard your pets and avoid unplanned vets' bills is by keeping on top of their preventative health-care."

Right: Keep up-to-date with your dog's vaccinations.

NINA'S TIPS INCLUDE:

● Staying up-to-date with vaccinations and flea and worming treatments; this can avoid potentially serious — and more costly — issues further down the line.

● Neutering not only stops unwanted pregnancies but can help prevent some types of cancer and pyometra — a life-threatening infection of the womb — in female dogs, and prostate disease and testicular cancer in males.

● Providing daily exercise and a nutritious well-balanced diet will mean your pet is less likely to pile on the pounds and develop weight-related health problems needing costly lifelong medication.

● Don't ignore or cancel pet insurance — do your homework and read the policy so you know exactly what is covered and how much to budget for.

WHAT'S YOUR PET'S CARBON PAWPRINT?

Eighty-five per cent of owners don't know what their pet's carbon footprint is, while 40 per cent are completely unaware animals even have one, according to a study by Agria Pet Insurance.

And while the nationwide survey revealed that 35 per cent of owners admitted to not taking any steps to reduce their pet's carbon footprint, encouragingly almost half (43 per cent) are interested in learning how to.

"It's fantastic to see the research by Agria showing that pet owners are motivated to be more sustainable — every paw in the right direction is a positive one!" said Cotswolds farmer, rural TV presenter, and Agria Pet Insurance sustainability ambassador Adam Henson, who owns Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla, Olive.

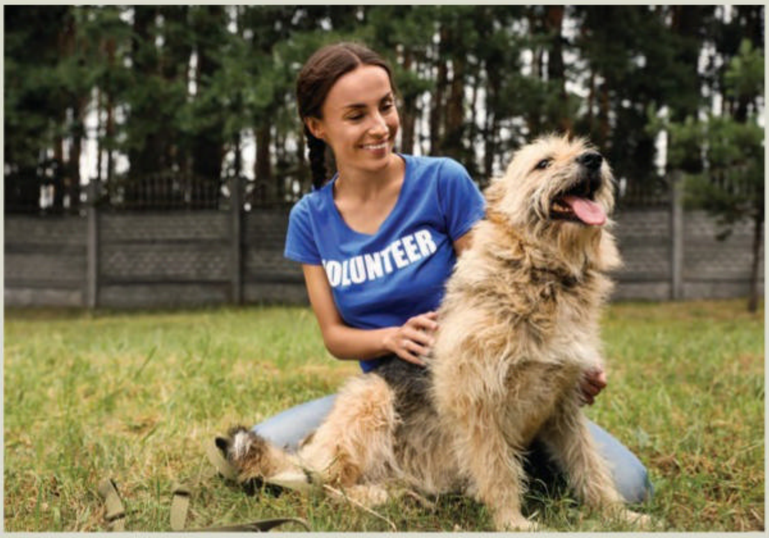
Janet Hughes, UK sustainability lead at Agria Pet Insurance, added: "When it comes to owning a pet, it is easy to get confused about what is and isn't sustainable. It's very encouraging to see so many of us are keen to understand or do more to reduce the impact our pet has on the environment."

Pet accessories, such as toys, bedding and leads, food and waste, have been identified by owners as the top carbon contributors.

Right: Dog owners are keen to find out more about what is and is not sustainable among their dog's food and accessories.

Charities in crisis

A perfect storm is brewing in the dog rescue sector, with charities seeking help urgently. **Andrea McHugh** reports.



Right: Rising costs have seen a reduction in the number of people who can afford to volunteer.

Below: Charities have seen a lot more dogs being brought in for rehoming.

There have been many unforeseen consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the UK locked down and the world as we knew it changed irrevocably. At a time when many people were working from home and enjoying exploring walks in their local area for the first time, the idea of escaping the rat race and owning a family dog seemed more attractive than ever.

> "On average we receive about 10 calls a day for dogs who are between one and two years old… a lot of these dogs have had no training or behavioural work…"

Right: COVID-19 saw an increase in the dog population but post-pandemic many dogs were given up.

> **“Many people who are facing rising costs and unable to afford veterinary or behaviourist bills, find themselves in a horrible situation where something must give. Unfortunately, that ‘something’ is often the family dog.”**

Unfortunately, this played perfectly into the hands of unscrupulous breeders. Puppy sales hit the roof, with outrageous prices being paid by members of the public who had good intentions but little idea of what they were letting themselves in for.

Fast forward three years, and many of those people have returned to their offices, schools have re-opened, and the cost-of-living crisis is hitting hard. As a result, rescue centres are facing an influx of thousands of untrained, unsocialised dogs, many with untreated, expensive medical conditions. This pressure on animal welfare organisations who currently receive no government funding, but are experiencing vastly increased outgoings with reduced donations and numbers of adopters, is causing a crisis of unparalleled proportions.

In February 2023, the All-Party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group (APDAWG) met at Westminster to look closely at the state of the UK rescue sector. During the meeting some leading voices shared their experiences, took part in a Q&A session, and discussed strategies that might help ease the situation.

Giles Webber, CEO of Birmingham Dogs Home (BDH), and chair of the Association of Dogs & Cats Homes (ADCH) was a guest speaker at the meeting. I caught up with Giles to find out his views on the situation and asked what, if anything, can be done to help.

Right: Giles Webber is CEO of Birmingham Dogs Home and chair of the Association of Dogs & Cats Homes.

“The ADCH is an umbrella organisation made up of 172 dog and cat organisations,” explained Giles. “Because of the size of those organisations and the thousands of dogs and cats that they care for, we know this represents a significant majority of pets in rescue in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. In October 2022 a survey revealed that 92 per cent of members reported seeing more people wanting to hand over a dog compared to pre-pandemic levels. It is estimated that the number of pet dogs in the UK rose by 10 – 12 per cent during the pandemic. At BDH we received 300 more strays in 2021, totalling 1,000-plus overall. At the same time,

“People are feeding their pets before themselves.”

Above: Once people returned to work, many dogs were left alone at home and developed behavioural problems.

Right: CEO of the Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home Lindsay Fyffe-Jardine.

adoptions dropped by four per cent. BDH, like so many other dog rescues, is full and at some points we had more dogs than kennels.

“During the pandemic, people were working flexible hours at home but had no access to dog trainers and were unable to socialise their puppies properly. Families spent a lot of time with their dogs, but once they returned to work and school, the dogs were left alone and started experiencing separation anxiety and developing behavioural problems. Many people who are facing rising costs and unable to afford veterinary or behaviourist bills, find themselves in a horrible situation where something must give. Unfortunately, that ‘something’ is often the family dog. Because many of these pandemic dogs are now almost three years old, and are bouncy and unruly, with behaviour problems, they are not easy to rehome, and so they are spending longer in the home while the team works with them. Consequently, our throughput of dogs is reduced, and we are unable to help as many as we did pre-pandemic.

“Many charities, including BDH, have contracts with their local councils to provide a provision of care for stray dogs that are brought in by the dog warden. These dogs are mostly abandoned and will never be collected by anyone. At BDH we have 10 local authority contracts, and it costs us money to run every single one of them. The only way we can do that is by raising money through fundraisers or commercial activities, such as boarding or grooming. The fact that we are subsidising local government authorities so that stray dogs are not left wandering the streets, and we are also working to rehome and rehabilitate the dogs to ensure public safety, is of great importance, but we are paying for all of this.

“Training and support of these dogs takes longer, which puts even more pressure on charities. In addition, there is a reduction in the number of adopters because people are understandably wary of adding to their financial burdens. Many ADCH members are also reporting a drop in volunteers who cannot afford to travel. Putting all these factors together can add many weeks to the adoption process and is creating a perfect storm.

“We are hoping that government decision makers at the APDAWG meeting listened to the facts and figures presented, and will recognise the importance of dog rescue within local communities. If charities are forced to close due to lack of funding, or to vastly reduce their services, the problems will not disappear. The link between pet ownership and well-being is massive, and we believe that dog rescue charities should have a voice and a resonance with government to recognise the important community services that they provide.

“We hope the government will look at things like grants, capping of utility bills, and other ways to protect rescues and enable them to continue their work. BDH is currently spending its reserves on operational overheads, but we don’t want to reduce our services significantly because if we do, we will be failing our local communities and the dogs in our care.”

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Lindsay Fyffe-Jardine, CEO of the Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home, was another guest speaker at APDAWG, and has long been raising awareness of a pet poverty crisis in Scotland. The situation has been made worse by the loss of funding donations from people experiencing financial difficulties.

“The home currently works with 84 foodbanks and community groups in eastern and central Scotland to provide essential pet food, collars, Right: CEO and founder of All Dogs Matter Ira Moss.

Far right top and below: Dogs like these — now rescued by All Dogs Matter and safe — are at risk of being abandoned.

jackets, and bedding, and other care items to help people keep their pets," said Lindsay.

"We know that where there's a pet in crisis there's often a person in crisis, and thanks to the donations we make to foodbanks, and the information our teams provide, thousands of pets are able to stay with their families. This is helping to avoid an even bigger pet crisis. Without this intervention we would be completely full and have to close our doors.

"People are not only finding it a challenge to provide food for their pets, but also struggling to access veterinary care, or behaviourist help, and many can't even afford the data on their phones to enable them to access internet help. Despite this, most dogs are well cared for — often better than the owners, because the trauma of having to give the dog to a rehoming centre is so awful. We also supply a lot of dog jackets, because there is a dignity associated with being able to keep your pet warm. Having no option but to take your dog to bed to keep him warm can make people feel worse.

"I am not proud that pet foodbanks exist, but we receive calls every day, seven days a week, from people who are at a crossroads and in need of support. When we explain that they can access pet food and supplies there is a huge sense of relief. Our focus now is to provide early community intervention before the situation gets to a point where a pet needs to be surrendered to a rehoming centre. Education is valued and at the forefront of our strategy, but that comes afterwards, because in a moment of crisis, people need direct, practical help.

"I believe that animal welfare intervention should come at the same point as human welfare intervention. We are calling for the government to look at putting cash-based systems in place for people who are struggling. We know that cats and dogs form part of the dependants in a household and are closely connected to well-being. People are feeding their pets before themselves."

ALL DOGS MATTER

Ira Moss is founder and CEO of All Dogs Matter, a charity that works in and around London to help transform the lives of unwanted and abandoned dogs.

"Since before Christmas we have seen a lot more dogs coming in, and they are predominantly bull breeds," said Ira. "On average we receive about 10 calls a day for dogs who are between one and two years old. A lot of these dogs can weigh up to 45kg and are homed with young mums in flats, and have had no training or behavioural work, so it can be hard to place them. People paid so much for dogs in the first place that they want to get some of their money back and are trying to sell the dogs through online sites without revealing any of their issues or bite history. There have been some recent fatalities reported in the news, and I honestly fear that this is the tip of the iceberg.

"Some of these extra-large Bulldogs have been left on their own in properties once they have given birth to puppies. If they do end up at the local pound and have a microchip, the previous owner just says they've been sold on and nothing is done.

"We are hoping that the police will reinforce microchipping, which is meant to be law now, and that there is enforced regulation to prevent people advertising dogs online. There are so many loopholes in the law and nobody seems to care."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- **Visit the ADCH website (www.adch.org.uk) to find your nearest local charity.**
- **Contact the charity and ask what help, either financial or otherwise, you can provide.**
- **Consider sponsoring a dog who is awaiting rescue. This can be for as little as £5 a month but makes a huge difference to charities.**
- **When possible, contribute pet food and care products to your local foodbank or collection points in supermarkets.**

The great outdoors!

Check out these six dog-friendly camping and glamping sites to help find your dream holiday.

Discover some of the UK's best campsites on the Best of British website.

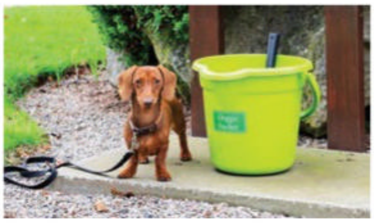
As memories of a very cold winter subside, many of us will be considering booking a fun holiday with our dogs. If you've never tried camping, glamping, or caravanning, it's well worth thinking about as there really is something to suit every taste and budget. Here are six great options to help kickstart your search.

NATIONWIDE

BEST OF BRITISH

The Best of British website includes a huge number of the UK's very best campsites, touring caravan sites, and holiday parks. Best of British is approaching its 30th anniversary, and consists of an elite group of handpicked, prestigious, privately owned parks, which promise outstanding customer service. All but one of the parks are dog friendly, and there is a huge variety of locations and accommodation, from shepherds' huts to safari tents, Romany caravans to camping pods. Best of British recognises the importance of dogs in people's lives, and prides itself on providing some fantastic dog-friendly sites for families or adult-only holidays.

● **For more information on choosing your next adventure, simply visit https://www.bob.org.uk to check out the locations, regions, and facilities on offer and sign up for the newsletter to take advantage of any available discounts.**



If you are part of the Your Dog Membership your dogs can stay for free.

ESSEX

FEN FARM CARAVAN AND CAMPING

This family run, quiet retreat is uniquely located on Mersea Island, in north east Essex. Measuring just five by two miles, Mersea Island is reached via The Strood causeway, and Fen Farm, which is close to the sea and a country park, is conveniently located in a small village. There are 90 fully serviced, static, owner-occupied caravans, with plenty of room for tourers, tents, or motorhomes.

Fen Farm is a tranquil spot, with no club house or pool, but there are play areas with swings, seesaws, and climbing frames and lots of opportunities for families to explore the dog-friendly beach and enjoy lovely walks.

The first tent was pitched at Fen Farm 100 years ago by the current owner's grandfather, and the site won the David Bellamy Gold Conservation Award for work done to protect the environment. Three dogs are generally accepted but more may be welcome during the low season.

● **For further information, visit www.fenfarm.co.uk**

Above right: Fen Farm is a tranquil spot for owners and their dogs.

Below right: Enjoying the beach at Fen Farm.

Above: The Millside Wigwams site is super dog friendly.

Right: The cabins are very cosy.

LINCOLNSHIRE

WIGWAM HOLIDAYS MILLSIDE

If the idea of a rural retreat in a beautiful glamping pod appeals, have a look at Millside Wigwams — a deluxe site in the tiny village of Barkston, Lincolnshire. The site is located on a field adjacent to a working farm and is super dog friendly, with beautiful walks in the area. Thanks to hot tubs, fairy lights, fire pits, personal kitchen areas, and ensuite bathrooms, you will definitely not be missing out on any home comforts in these cosy cabins. There is a larger communal cabin with games and activities, suitable for rainy day fun, and a maize maze for children to explore in the summer; new for 2023 are goat walks! You will also find plenty of tracks, riverside walks, and fun Lincolnshire attractions to explore.

● **For further information, visit www.wigwamholidays.com/millside**

If you are part of the Your Dog Membership your dogs can stay for free.

CANTERBURY

SUNNYFIELD CAMPSITE

Sunnyfield is set in an eight-acre meadow in the North Kent Downs, 20 minutes from the city of Canterbury. A family run business, the owners describe it as "being in a wonderful little secret pocket of England" with nature trails and historical sites on the doorstep.

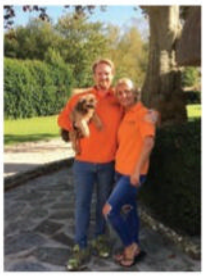
The meadow has 26 pitches, and the site is car free, so on arrival you park up, grab a wheelbarrow to transport your belongings, and wind your way among the wild flowers to your spacious pitch. Once set up, you can relax, light a campfire, and enjoy the peace and tranquillity. You are welcome to take your own tent or reserve on-site glamping bell tents and camper vans. Facilities include composting loos, converted horse-box showers, and plenty of wash stations. Disposable BBQs are not allowed but fire bowls with grills can be hired.

Well-behaved dogs are welcome, provided owners clean up after them and respect the peace and quiet of the site.

Above right: Sunnyfield Campsite — "a little secret pocket of England."

Below right: Sunnyfield is set in an eight-acre meadow.

● **For further information, visit www.thesunnyfield.co.uk**



Above: Lord and Lady Hodgkin, the owners of Concierge Camping.

WEST SUSSEX

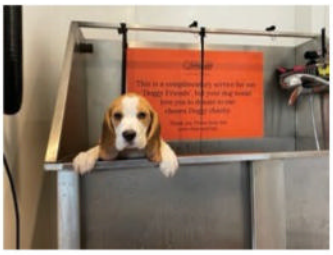
CONCIERGE CAMPING

For a holiday with added luxury, check out Concierge Camping, in West Ashling, near Chichester, West Sussex. This is a dog-friendly, five-star touring park, which also includes luxury safari-style lodges, located in an area steeped in local history, close to the South Downs National Park.

Concierge Camping at Ratham Estate opened for business in 2015 after being purchased by Lord and Lady Hodgkin in 2011, and has won multiple awards including the prestigious AA Campsite of the Year Award in 2019.

The ground and pitches are tastefully landscaped with outstanding hotel standard amenities, including reception, shop, bar, coffee shop, and seating areas.

Three dogs are allowed per pitch, with plenty of fantastic walks on site and off, plus a complimentary dog wash.



Right: A complimentary dog wash is available at Concierge Camping.

● **For further information, visit www.conciergecamping.co.uk**

CASE STUDY

Far right: Kate and Wiz.

Kate Faulkner from Long Bennington in Lincolnshire visited Concierge Camping in 2022 with her Dalmatian Wiz and Jack Russell Charley. "I had a nightmare journey and was very late and stressed on arrival," recalled Kate. "However, I was immediately put at ease, and absolutely nothing was too much trouble. Everything about this site is luxury, and I honestly felt like I'd visited a spa at the end of our stay. There is a gorgeous walk to a stream and picnic area, which I did several times a day, and the facilities felt like being in a Hilton hotel. I absolutely loved it!"

Above: Enjoy the view!

SOMERSET

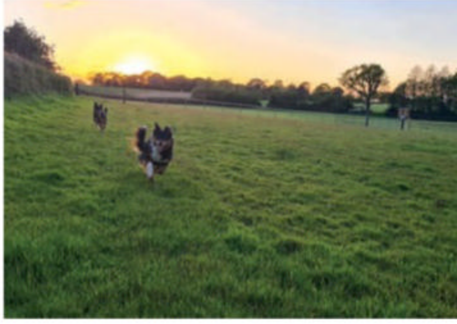
BUCKLAND FARM CAMPING

The serenity of Somerset awaits you and your dog at Buckland Farm Camping, situated at the foot of the Blackdown Hills, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Dogs are very welcome, and the owners are planning two fully fenced pitches with drive-through gates in 2023, allowing dogs to mooch freely in their own garden. There is also a fenced off-lead area where dogs can enjoy a run without leaving the site. The off-lead area is mown, with some areas left with longer grass for dogs to explore and sniff.

Owned by Carol Smith, who has competed as part of the England agility team, the site runs classes in agility, hoopers, lifeskills, sports foundation, and general companion dog training, so if you are interested book ahead. Tents, motorhomes, caravans, and camper vans are accepted and with 15 pitches over five acres there is plenty of room. Composting loos, hot water showers, picnic areas, and a communal area are all part of the site's facilities.

● **For further information, visit www.bucklandfarmcamping.com**



Right: There is a fenced off-lead area on the site where dogs can enjoy a run.

MORE INFO

● **For more information about other dog-friendly holidays, the benefits of Your Dog Membership, and how you can enjoy lots more discounts and offers, visit the Your Dog website (www.yourdog.co.uk) and find out how you can become a member.**

● **Remember to do your research, visit the websites, look at reviews, and talk to holiday companies about what is available for dogs prior to booking your holiday.**

Scentsational!

Dogs don't just need exercise and mental stimulation — they also need to sniff, says **Karen Bush.**

Right: Give your dog the opportunity to explore the countryside with his nose.

Smell is your dog's primary sense, and sniffing is one of his daily needs, a behaviour which forms an inextricable part of his genetic make-up, apprising him about his environment and the other dogs, humans, and animals he meets in it. Just as importantly, it's an activity which makes him happier for being allowed to do it, and that in itself should be enough for you to encourage him, and create opportunities for him to do so.

> "...'exercise' isn't just about using muscles."

WALKING HIGHLIGHTS

We enjoy taking our time to gaze at a beautiful view, to mull over the latest news in the papers, to admire the composition and detail of an Old Master painting, or to stroll slowly along the high street doing a little window shopping. For a dog, sniffing during a walk probably encompasses something of all these things, plus elements we can't possibly hope to understand with our own comparably poor sense of smell. Hurrying them past things they would evidently like to investigate with their noses for a little longer must be intensely frustrating for them. Remember, 'exercise' isn't just about using muscles. Along with food, going for a walk is a highlight of the day for most dogs, who can't while away idle hours at home watching the TV or chatting to friends on social media. Getting out and taking in all those glorious smells is about mental stimulation just as much as running off any excess energy.

Try wherever possible to allow your dog to sniff for as long as he wants, rather than becoming impatient and hustling him along before he's done. Even if you take the same route each day, there will still be new and interesting things to sniff; the scent bulletin boards will be constantly changing from hour to hour as well as day to day. Some days, you might even let him dictate the route you take

> “Sniffing isn’t just a way for your dog to inform himself about his environment, it can also be a ‘calming signal’…”

by literally following his nose.

BRINGING THE OUTDOORS IN

Sometimes it’s not always possible to let your dog freely explore all those fascinating scents outdoors — but it doesn’t mean he has to do without. “Creating a ‘country walk’ in the familiarity of your home environment is fun for dogs and guardians and can be so beneficial for dogs who are worried by the outside world, when time is tight, weather is bad, or when a dog may not be able to participate in outdoor activities he used to enjoy,” explained Sarah Fisher, founder of Animal Centred Education, which often incorporates scent into its learning methods. “Gather dried leaves and grass, hay, straw, sheep wool gathered from hedgerows, animal bedding, twigs or anything else you think might be of interest and value to your dog. Place the items in old pillow cases, tying them up to keep the contents inside; this also protects your dog in case he tries to eat the non-food items. Think of other elements of the outside world you can bring to your dog at home; take small cloths when you go out, and wipe them on trees, grass, or posts as you pass by and bring them home to add to a sack or tray.”

● **Find out more about Animal Centred Education at www.animalcentrededucation.co.uk and on Facebook at ACE Connections.**

Above right: A dog picks up a scent during a walk in the woods.

Right: Mantrailing is an activity you and your dog could enjoy together as you follow the trail.

Below: A blanket smelling of his littermates will help to settle a puppy in his new home.

MANTRAILING

If you feel a little excluded while your dog is taking in all the amazing odours around him out on walks, why not try mantrailing? A relatively recent sport, it gives your dog’s incredible olfactory senses an intense mental workout, while letting you participate too in his enjoyment of following a fascinating scent. It’s accessible to all people and dogs, regardless of age, breed, or disability. As well as being a low-impact exercise it’s also open to dogs with confidence and reactivity issues as they’re always worked one at a time.

● **Find out more at www.mantrailinguk.com**

SMELLS COMFORTING

Your dog can identify you by your own unique scent, and studies indicate that canine olfactory systems respond most positively to scents associated with their guardians. Leaving an unwashed item of your clothing with your dog if he has to stay at the vet’s or in kennels may be comforting for him. Similarly, a blanket or towel that smells of his siblings can help make the transition to a new home less stressful for a puppy, and providing

DID YOU KNOW?
Warming food increases its aroma, which may make it more tempting and encourage older or convalescing dogs with poor appetites to eat.

a scent introduction before bringing a human baby home can make things go more smoothly.

SMELL O'CLOCK

Your dog's sense of smell doesn't just inform him about the presence of people, animals, and objects who have passed by, but tells him how long ago they were present, through judging how much an odour has faded.

Just how remarkably fine-tuned this ability is, has been demonstrated in a study where dogs brought in at right angles to a trail walked by a person were able to determine within a mere five steps which direction they had gone in.

TEMPERATURE

The average dog is said to be able to smell things nearly 12½ miles (20km) away, but this does also depend on weather conditions.

Wind, for example, may scatter scent molecules, or blow them towards or away from your dog. Temperature also affects scents.

As warm air rises, it carries scent molecules with it, so that in warmer weather all those beguiling smells will tend to be more dispersed and higher above the ground.

In chilly conditions however, scent molecules tend to fall closer to the ground with the cold air and to be generally closer together.

THE NOSE KNOWS

The dog's olfactory super-sense has been harnessed in a number of ways by humans. Canines have been trained to sniff out everything from missing or lost persons and fugitives, explosives, drugs, and evidence of arson to detecting diseases including cancer. Some become invaluable support dogs able to alert owners to conditions such as low blood sugar or to seizures before they happen. Most recently detection dogs made the news for their proficiency at sniffing out the presence of coronavirus in people, whether displaying symptoms or not.

SPICE UP YOUR GARDEN

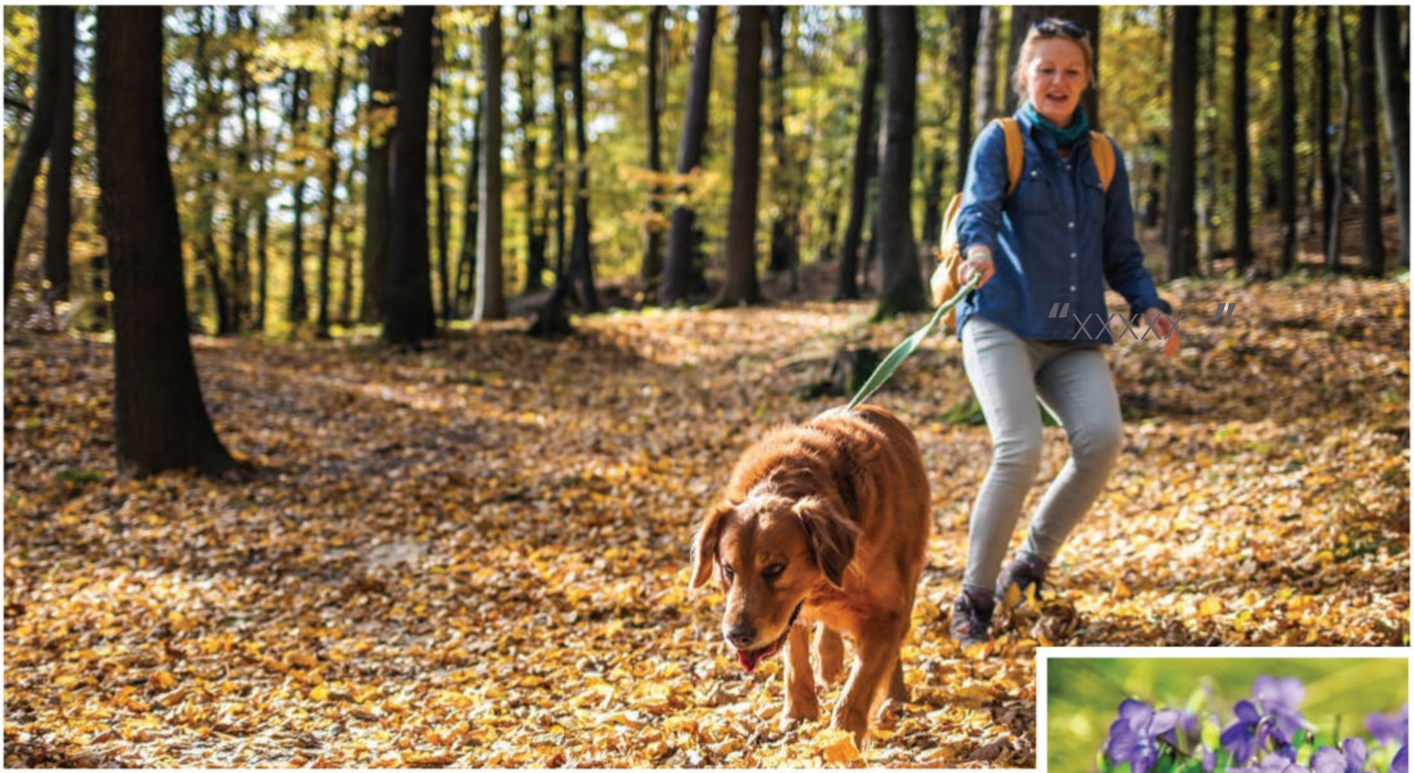
Although you may think the floral displays in your garden look attractive, unless you get a lot of regular incursions from wildlife, your dog may consider it a rather sterile environment. Make it a more scentsational experience by adding plants that will add fragrant notes of interest for him. Choosing aromatic plants that you can both enjoy can be a meeting of minds.

> "Most recently detection dogs made the news for their proficiency at sniffing out the presence of coronavirus in people, whether displaying symptoms or not."

DID YOU KNOW?
Dogs really can smell fear; the chemicals produced by your body when afraid can be detected almost immediately.

Detection dogs do their bit to help the environment too. They can be trained to search out invasive species of animals and plants, crop pests and diseases, and endangered animal species.

Right: Humans have benefited hugely from dogs' incredible sense of smell, using them as detection and assistance dogs and in many other ways.



Above: Try to avoid pulling your dog away from an interesting scent.

A few you might like to include are:

- **Violets** *(Viola odorata)* — sweetly scented flowers, which have been popular since Victorian times.
- **Fennel** *(Foeniculum vulgare)* — tall, elegant, and graceful frond-like leaves; has a distinctive aniseed scent.
- **Rosemary** *(Rosmarinus officinalis)* — choose from varieties that can grow up to 6ft (1.8m) or smaller dwarf varieties; the evergreen needle-like leaves are strongly aromatic.
- **Lemon balm** *(Melissa officinalis)* — a deliciously buttery lemon smell, but can be invasive so best grown in a container.
- **Bergamot** *(Monarda didyma)* — growing between 18 – 36in (45 – 90cm), this is often called bee balm because bees love the vivid red flowers.
- **Lemon thyme** *(Thymus x citriodorus)* – there are over 50 different forms of thyme; this one is a low-growing evergreen with a lovely lemon scent.
- **Catnip** *(Nepeta cataria)* — not just for kitties; some dogs are just as fascinated by the scent as felines.
- **Meadowsweet** *(Filipendula ulmaria)* — the delicate clusters of flowers have a strong, sweet smell.
- **Sage** *(Salvia officinalis)* — has grey-green foliage and pretty blue flowers: earthy, woody fragrance, and a useful addition to the garden as a culinary herb for you.

As a bonus, lemon thyme, lemon balm, catnip, and rosemary are all said to help keep mosquitoes at bay, so if you enjoy sitting outside with your dog in the evening it may be worth planting them near your favourite place to relax.

CALMLY DOES IT

Sniffing isn't just a way for your dog to inform himself about his environment, it can also be a 'calming signal', a term first coined by Norwegian trainer Turid Rugaas. Calming signals are behaviours dogs use to indicate when they're feeling uncomfortable, to help avoid disputes and reduce tension. You may already be familiar with calming signals such as yawning and turning the head away; now add sniffing to the list. You'll often see it when out walking if someone is approaching, in busy or noisy places where there's a lot going on, or at times when your dog feels uncertain or intimidated — watch to see what he does with his nose.

- **More about calming signals can be found in 'On Talking Terms With Dogs: Calming Signals' by Turid Rugaas.**

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Right: 1. Violets. 2. Rosemary. 3. Lemon balm. 4. Sage.

"I did once treat a Boxer who ate his whole month's supply of painkillers in one go because they tasted like treats."

BE WARNED!

Many things, from human foods to plants and medicines, can be toxic to our pets. **Vicky Payne** tells us more.

ABOUT VICKY
Holistic vet Vicky Payne BVetMed MRCVS is based in East Sussex, and qualified from the Royal Veterinary College in 2001. She uses a range of complementary therapies alongside conventional medicine and surgery.

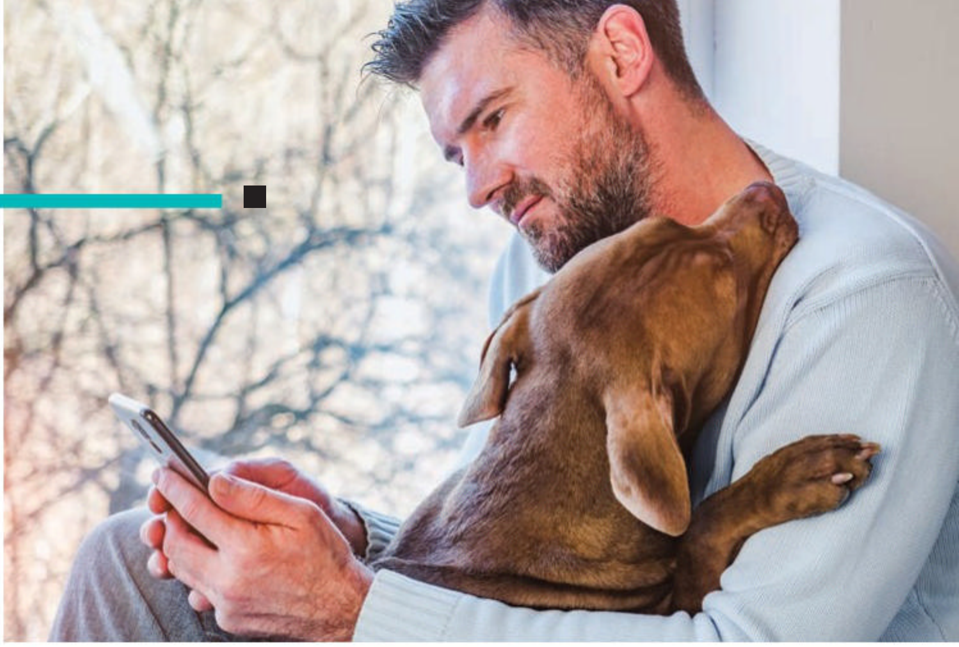
Main: Don't leave a dangerous foodstuff such as chocolate where your dog can get hold of it.

When I studied herbal medicine, we looked at case studies of wild animals self-medicating. Elephants would travel many miles to a special patch of clay if suffering from diarrhoea, and chimps have been observed folding and swallowing rough, hairy leaves to relieve internal parasites. Some people even believe that dogs can select herbs to heal themselves… but given the number of toxic substances that I have seen dogs ingest I am not sure they retain much, if any, of the instinct of wild animals when it comes to self-medication!

It is now well known that grapes and dried grapes are toxic to dogs, though the mechanism remains unclear. Some dogs can eat large amounts at once, or small amounts regularly, with no ill effects. Others can suffer fatal kidney failure after eating a very small number of grapes so I tend to treat all cases quite aggressively. Although owners can be upset at the thought of a large bill for blood tests and intravenous fluids when their puppy has stolen a small carton of raisins, my approach means we haven't lost a raisin dog for many years. I will never forget the dogs we did lose before the danger was well known; three large dogs over a year who ate 500g of raisins, a whole rich fruit cake, and grapes from a garden vine respectively.

I won't labour the point on chocolate, although despite all the warnings, we still see dogs full of chocolate and no regrets! White chocolate is safe as it does not contain theobromine, but the high fat and sugar content can cause vomiting and diarrhoea. The higher the cocoa content, the more dangerous the chocolate. If your dog eats chocolate, estimate the amount and cocoa content and call your vet or use one of the many online calculators. The weird thing is vets and nurses can make a dog throw up chocolate one minute, then snaffle a chocolate biscuit the next!

Xylitol has emerged as a big risk to dogs in recent years as it is added to more and more products. Often used in diet foods and chewing gum, it can also be found in cupcake frosting and some peanut butters. Watch out for 'birch sugar' on ingredient labels as this is another name for xylitol. I remember my last xylitol case because I hate making people cry, especially children. The family dog had chomped some sugar-free gum and by my calculations the dose was borderline toxic. We took blood tests to monitor blood glucose because in dogs xylitol binds to glucose receptors and won't come off, meaning the blood sugar drops dangerously low. Once Rusty was over the hypoglycaemia risk, we still had to monitor his liver as xylitol can cause liver failure a week after ingestion. Thankfully, Rusty was fine — perhaps there wasn't as much gum left in the packet as his owners thought.



Above left: Plants toxic to dogs include foxgloves and lily of the valley.

Above right: If you suspect your dog has eaten something poisonous, contact your vet immediately.

> **"I have heard of dogs dying from oleander leaves falling into a water bowl so this is a plant to avoid if you have pets."**

Other human foods that can cause problems for dogs include some nuts, alcohol, dough, mouldy food, and members of the onion family. A colleague once told me of a dog who died after stealing a bucket of onion bhaji mix from an Indian restaurant, but it is more common to see dogs with blood changes from eating smaller amounts of onion or garlic regularly. Small dogs who eat what their human does are at most risk. Garlic is often recommended as a healthy supplement for dogs, but seek advice from a vet on a safe amount for your dog.

I haven't seen many dogs with garden or houseplant poisoning, thank goodness! Most of the plants that are listed as toxic can cause irritation of the mouth and digestive tract, leading to drooling and vomiting. There are a few more deadly plants to avoid such as foxglove, lily of the valley, dumb cane, and oleander. I have heard of dogs dying from oleander leaves falling into a water bowl so this is a plant to avoid if you have pets. Check plant labels when buying, or search online to see if plants are pet safe. Bulbs seem particularly tempting for dogs, so store bulbs and seeds safely and protect newly planted bulbs from curious digging dogs.

Human and animal medicine ingestion are common emergencies. Often the drug itself is not that dangerous, but dogs tend to eat a whole packet rather than one or two tablets. I can think of several cases of dogs eating packets of ibuprofen, antidepressants, and even a whole pack of Pro-Plus caffeine pills, which have required us to make the dogs sick, dose them with activated charcoal, and keep them in hospital on a drip for 24 hours. Something I haven't seen yet is a dog with changes from hormone creams or vitamin D creams, although cases have been reported. Do let your doctor know you have pets if they plan to prescribe topical medication. Keep all pet and human medicines safely out of reach, especially any palatable dog pills. I did once treat a Boxer who ate his whole month's supply of painkillers in one go because they tasted like treats.

RESISTANCE IN RATS

The dangers continue outside of the home, though thankfully metaldehyde slug pellets are now banned. Rodenticides are a worry though as they get ever stronger to combat resistance in rats. Last year a very nosy Fox Terrier called Orca managed to ingest a very dangerous rat bait, which had been used by a professional pest controller. Despite early treatment, she needed several weeks of blood tests, drips, and medication before she got the all-clear.

Other garden dangers include ethylene glycol, most often found in engine anti-freeze but also in the oddest places including some snow globes. Sadly, a broken snow globe led to the death of two dogs last Christmas, but reading about them means everyone is now more aware of the risk.

Deliberate poisoning is incredibly rare despite the regular stories on local social media groups about 'poisoned sausages'. Almost all the cases I see are accidental, either from eating things at home or on a walk. Monitor your dog closely on walks and use a muzzle if he can't be trained to 'leave'. Recent 'park poisonings' have included a Chihuahua suffering from nicotine and cannabis ingestion from discarded joint butts, and vomiting and diarrhoea from eating rotten, discarded food. In all cases try to take a sample of what your pet has eaten (or what they have brought up) or the packaging to help your vet decide how to treat them.

You may wish to call Animal PoisonLine on 01202 509000, who will give advice for a small fee when your vet's surgery is closed.

Below: Human foods that can cause problems for dogs include members of the onion family and grapes.

YOUR ACTIVE DOG

Discover two activities that can help deepen your relationship with your dog and provide some training goals. Animal scientist **Dr Jacqueline Boyd** introduces you to obedience and rally.

> "Rally can make for a fun and interesting challenge for dogs and handlers."

Above: Obedience can be hugely rewarding, whether you're aiming for the highest competitive levels or just want to brush up your skills with regular training.
Image: Jack Beasley/Flick.digital.

Right: In rally, you and your dog negotiate a course of signposted stations.
Images: Eleanor Riley and The Kennel Club.

Right: At each station the sign indicates the exercise dog and handler must complete.

I recently heard someone say that dog training is for life, not just classes. How right they are!

It is easy to become complacent after completing puppy foundation classes or canine good citizen sessions and your dog has settled into relatively consistent behaviours.

However, training remains important throughout our dogs' lives. It allows us to 'proof' and improve behaviours that might have become a little less consistent. Training means that we can continue to build and strengthen our relationships with our dogs as well as skills for everyday life. Positive training can also challenge our dogs physically and mentally, helping them to have interesting and happy lives with us.

Above: In obedience classes your dog may learn exercises like distance control.

Above right: Any partnership with good basic skills in heelwork and recall could take part in obedience.

Images: Rachel Oates and The Kennel Club.

> "I love the precision of obedience work and the close partnership between dog and handler that is required to complete some of the exercises."

DID YOU KNOW?

Your dog does not need to be a pedigree breed to compete in obedience or rally.

Rally is known as 'rally O' in the US.

At the lower levels of competitive rally, dogs compete on-lead — it is only at higher levels that off-lead work is expected.

HOBBIES WITH YOUR DOG

Training skills that are useful in day-to-day life can also open up a world of potential activities, which you can do with your dog and create fun, sociable, interesting, and potentially competitive opportunities if you wish.

Obedience and rally are two activities that you and your dog might enjoy. Both are suitable for dogs and handlers of all abilities, as well as a range of ages, breeds, and types of dog. They also form a great foundation for other canine disciplines.

Whether you aspire to compete at international level, or simply enjoy the challenge of a weekly class followed by tea, cake, and a chat with friends, both two- and four-legged, obedience and rally are worth considering.

WHAT IS OBEDIENCE?

I started my adventure into dog sports thanks to obedience, and it still forms the basis of all my training plans, whatever discipline I am working my dogs in.

I love the precision of obedience work and the close partnership between dog and handler that is required to complete some of the exercises. Heelwork, where the dog maintains a close and consistent position irrespective of your speed and movement, is stunning to watch when done well.

However, you do not need absolute precision obedience, and at lower competitive levels consistent performance in the exercises is most important. Obedience concentrates on the ability of dog and handler to communicate and to execute specific exercises cleanly, clearly, and with minimum fuss.

In competitive obedience, toys and treats cannot be carried in the ring, except in introductory classes where rewards may be given at the end of an exercise or between individual exercises. A happy, motivated dog and handler is the aim, and dogs can compete from six months old.

After basic puppy classes, you can progress to advanced training classes for developing more specific obedience skills. Any dog and handler with good basic skills in heelwork and recall can consider taking part in obedience. At lower competitive levels, multiple cues are permitted, while at higher levels progression to using single cues is expected.

Your dog will develop skills in retrieving, send-away (where you send him to a specific location), distance control (where he will be asked to perform behaviours such as sit, down, and stand at a distance from you) and scent discrimination in obedience. These are all found at higher competitive levels.

However, even if you never compete, training these skills can be a fun challenge for you and your dog, whatever his age, breed, or type, while taking account of his overall health and welfare.

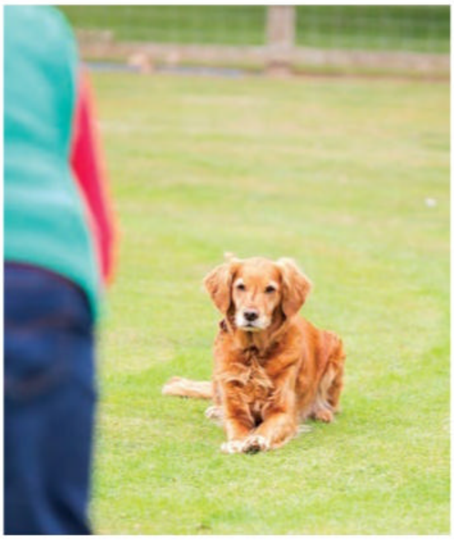
WHAT IS RALLY?

Rally evolved from the heelwork aspect of competitive obedience work. Instead of being directed in exercises by a judge or steward, rally involves dog and handler negotiating a course of signposted stations independently. It represents an opportunity for you to work closely with your dog through a series of progressive training challenges.

Each station instructs the dog and handler partnership to complete a specific exercise that could be static (such as sit) or moving (changing pace or turning). In competition, handlers and dogs start with 200 points. Points are lost for mistakes or inaccurate movements.

The course is set by the judge and is tailored to the standard of dogs and handlers, with the difficulty of exercises increasing as the competitive levels rise.

At lower levels of competitive rally, dogs of six months and over can compete, making it a great option for developing training goals with younger dogs. The



Right: Rally is an activity that develops your bond with your dog.

Far right: Rally is a great opportunity to work closely with your dog through a range of training challenges.

Images: Eleanor Riley and The Kennel Club.

DID YOU KNOW?
There are different levels of competitive achievement in both obedience and rally — progression might be on a points basis, or on class wins.

nature of the discipline means that older canine friends are able to participate too. Pedigree and mixed breed dogs can also both compete in rally.

Rally can make for a fun and interesting challenge for dogs and handlers. The signs are all the instruction available, and you can encourage your dog as often as needed, although excess cues may be penalised. As with obedience, no food or toy rewards can be carried or given to your dog in the competition ring. This means that practice and proofing of your dog's skills is critical.

HOW CAN I TAKE PART?

If you are interested in learning more, your local dog training group should be able to advise. Many dog training clubs and trainers are involved in competitive activities and can advise you on the best way to progress, or support you in finding a suitable trainer to meet your ambitions. Alternatively, you could attend a local event to watch, or even volunteer to help — both great ways to learn more about the disciplines as well as meeting people who can support you.

Many events are reliant on volunteers, and generally organisers are grateful and delighted when interested individuals are keen to assist and learn more about their canine disciplines.

LOOK OUT FOR LOCAL GROUPS AND CLUBS

There are plenty of groups on social media that can advise on local trainers and clubs, as well as keeping you abreast of the wider happenings in obedience and rally. Some groups focus on shows and events, others on training and developing skill sets. All are useful connection points for anyone new to the disciplines.

The Kennel Club website also provides a useful library of resources relating to obedience and rally — well worth exploring if you have competitive aims. There are also other independent organisations that run events, training days, and competitions.

However, you do not need to be competitive at all. Many clubs organise fun events, and plenty of people simply enjoy training their dog in progressive skills over time without ever stepping into the competition ring.

Obedience and rally are activities that will deepen your relationship with your dog and give you training goals to work towards. They will also develop your dog's behavioural skills set, which will help in everyday life.

Below: The precision of top level obedience can be impressive to watch.

Image: Sandy Young/ Flick.digital.

USEFUL LINKS:

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/events-and-activities/obedience

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/events-and-activities/rally

NEXT ISSUE:

Working trials, the canine activity with origins in police and military dog work that could be a great activity for you and your dog.

Freebies

Here's your chance to win some fabulous prizes — we've got 29 giveaways up for grabs.

4 TO GIVE AWAY

PET FOOD STORAGE SETS

The Cantina Pet Food Storage range by Scruffs has been designed to stylishly store dry food and pet treats on kitchen or utility room worktops.

Made in coated steel, and available in three colours, the 2-, 4-, 7-, and 12-litre canisters are robust and would suit any home décor. The smallest size is perfect for pet treats, while the 4-litre will hold a 2kg bag of kibble, and the 12-litre up to 6kg of food. The lids have been designed to form a seal, so food stays fresher for longer.

We have four storage sets to give away, including the 2-litre and 12-litre size canisters in dark grey.

● **For more information, visit www.petslovescruffs.com or email tellmemore@petslovescruffs.com**

10 TO GIVE AWAY

nutrafibre
For long-term digestive health & anal gland support
nutravet

TUBS OF SUPPLEMENT

Nutravet is giving away 10 tubs of its new, natural, high-fibre supplement, Nutrafibre. It's scientifically proven formula has been developed to help maintain the gut's natural balance by softening stool consistency and encouraging normal bowel movements.

The supplement supports digestive tract health to aid digestion, normal colon function, and long-term gut health, helping animals with sensitive tummies.

Nutrafibre is part of the Nutravet VetSelect range.

● **For more information, visit www.nutravet.co.uk**

10 TO GIVE AWAY

COSY PET BLANKETS

These comfy, soft blankets from Mr Mole can be embroidered with the name of your choice (to a maximum of 12 letters). Available in a wide range of colours, these practical pet blankets are machine washable and are ideal to use on a chair or sofa, in the car, or — for some lucky pets — on a bed! We have 10 medium-sized navy blankets to give away to readers, edged with either a purple or cerise trim.

● **For more information, visit www.mrmoleblankets.co.uk**

Nelson
Phoebe

5 TO GIVE AWAY

FURR BOOST DRINK
BEEF, Broccoli & Blueberry Drink
PORK, Sweet Potato & Apple Drink
CHICKEN, Butternut Squash & Cranberry Drink
200ml e

PACKS OF SMOOTHIE DRINKS

Furr Boost is giving away five mixed packs of its award-winning smoothie drink, which contains a meat, fruit, and vegetable, along with added oils and vitamins. This hydration drink supports the dog's well-being in areas such as digestion, skin and coat, anxiety, metabolism, and immunity, and can be used as a topper for dry foods or frozen to provide your dog with a tasty, cooling treat. You can also pour it into a lick mat to keep your pet calm and hydrated. Each pack contains one carton of the three smoothie flavours: chicken, butternut squash & cranberry; pork, apple & sweet potato; and beef, broccoli & blueberry.

● **For more information, visit www.furrboost.com**

HOW TO ENTER

For your chance to win these fabulous prizes, enter online by visiting www.yourdog.co.uk/freebies, quote the code DLR54RLD, and follow the instructions on screen. The closing date for entries is April 15, 2023 (UK only). Please note, you can enter online from March 2, 2023. For full competition terms and conditions, visit www.warnersgroup.co.uk/competition-terms

Dave Mathewson

& Oscar, Boo, Sam, and Dougie

By Alison Gallagher-Hughes

MATHEWSONS
The Class
HORNE'S EMPORIUM
160

Top: Sam, Marvin, and Oz (Oscar) in their pen.

Above: The Mathewsons team, with Dave pictured back left.

Image: Courtesy of UKTV/Air TV.

Dog-lover Dave Mathewson is a familiar face to fans of 'Bangers & Cash', a behind the scenes documentary about Mathewsons, a North Yorkshire classic car auction business renowned for its expertise in vintage vehicle sales.

'Bangers & Cash' first appeared on our screens in 2019; a seventh series is now screening on UKTV, and last year a spin-off, 'Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics', debuted.

Mathewsons, in Thornton Le Dale, is a family affair with dad Derek at the helm, and sons Dave and Paul running day-to-day operations. Other family members also work there and their four-legged friends are regularly seen on the programme.

Dogs and cars may seem a hazardous mix — but Dave has managed to create a dog-friendly workplace with a dog pen for safety and comfort.

> "We lost two spaniels... Toby was my wingman. It ripped my heart out when we lost him."

Q So how did you become a multi-dog household?

"We've always had dogs but a while back, we lost two spaniels in quick succession, a black one and a tan one, called Spud. The black one, Toby, was my wingman. It ripped my heart out when we lost him.

"My daughter asked if we were going to get another one. And I said: 'Amy, I can't, I can't do it.' Two or three months went by, and the topic came up again. Amy saw an advert for a litter of half a dozen spaniels. One of them looked just like Toby — his double; same markings, same eyes.

"I contacted the breeder but all the pups had been reserved. Later that evening, I had a call to say one was available and it was the one who looked like Toby. It was meant to be. That's Oscar. He is now five and he's the dog that you see most regularly on the programme.

"Then some friends of ours had a litter and I got talked into having one of them. Boo is now three and she recently had a litter of her own. She only had three pups and I was going to keep them all, but I was talked into letting a couple go and kept Sam, the smallest of the litter, who is now about six months old (since then Sam's brother, Dougie, has also come back to live with Dave).

"The dad is probably Marvin, a brown spaniel, who belongs to my son, Jack. Jack and Meg are living in an annexe to our house as they're saving to get their own place. So, we have four dogs of our own, Marvin, and occasionally we look after Ronnie who is Sam and Dougie's littermate."

Q What adaptations have you had to make?

"We're lucky to have a fair bit of room at home. I've got a big kennel on one side of the house that they sleep in. It has a lovely rubber floor, a radio, light, and infrared heaters that click on when it gets cold. I've built a really big run under the trees, which has some obstacles that they can run around and there's also a kennel for shelter.

"They come with us to work. When we had one or two they would stay in the office but with four (and occasionally, my brother might bring in his Labrador) it was asking a bit much, so we built a pen downstairs, in a corner of the unit so they could have their own space."

Q As a motor expert what's your advice when it comes to travelling with dogs? Do you have any

Right: The dogs on the patio.

vehicles you would particularly recommend?
"I suppose it depends on the dog, its size, and how many you have. We're lucky enough to own a couple of Land Rovers and I have a Discovery. They're very user friendly and easy to clean out. I recently bought a purpose-built travel crate, which is ideal for two reasons: safety primarily, but it also allows me to park up and open the tailgate so they can get some fresh air."

Q Do you work your dogs, or have they undergone any training?
"I've always trained them. We tend not to use leads when out walking, so obedience is essential. One of my friends shoots and he had the most obedient, laid-back spaniel. I was determined to try to train Toby to be as responsive and we just about got there. It's the same with Oscar; he's exceptionally good. I can walk through York city centre with him by my side and he rarely gets distracted."

Q Do any of your dogs get special privileges?
"Sam tends to get the most treats. Oscar is not too worried about them. Boo probably gets the most fuss because she's so easy. But when she's out, she's a different dog. We go into the forest with them every morning and I guarantee she'll be the one who I have to whistle back. She'll go off on a mission. Once we get back to the house, she'll just crash in front of the log burner or on a bed. She loves nothing more than being cuddled. She will come and sit next to you and as long as you've got a hand on her, she's happy."

Below: Dave takes the dogs for a walk.

Below right: Marvin and Dougie enjoy a run on the beach together.

Q Do you have any routines?
"We take a late walk every night and they know to turn right, down to the road, past the bus stop, then back and bedtime.

"As I'm walking up to the gate, I'll just say: 'Bedtime guys' and they know to go up to the kennel rather than to the house, even little Sam and he's only a few months old. I always go with them, say goodnight and shut the gate. We have a little routine: I put my hands through the gate to give them the last fuss of the evening and make sure they're OK.

"Before I turn in, the last thing I do is check the camera in the kennel, make sure the heat is still on if it's a cold night, and that they're all cuddled up."

Q If you were to do a road trip with one of your dogs, which dog would it be and what vehicle would you go in?
"Oscar is my new wingman. If he could talk, we'd have good conversations, I'm sure. Vehicle-wise, we're lucky enough to have quite a sizeable collection but one particular car, which I shouldn't have sold, was a Rover 14. It was pre-war, had been owned by one family, never been restored, and it was just a very, very usable car. It was one of those James Herriot cars and had such style."

Q What would be the soundtrack for your road trip and where would you travel?
"I've always wanted to do 'The Italian Job' road trip. I'd also like to go right around the UK, as close to the coast as possible, on all the little coastal roads. So, that would be a good road trip with Oscar in the Rover.

"As for the soundtrack, I have a real mixed bag on my phone, from ACDC to Marvin Gaye and Diana Ross, so I'd be quite happy with my own little Spotify list."

MORE INFO

- **'Bangers & Cash' can be seen on www.uktvplay.co.uk/shows/bangers-and-cash**
- **For more information on Mathewsons, visit www.mathewsons.co.uk**

The Heart of the Highlands

Scotland's Cairngorms National Park offers stunning landscapes with majestic mountains and wild moors. **Elizabeth Denholm** talks to ranger Polly Freeman about her top four walks for dog owners.

One man and his dog take in the spectacular views of the Cairngorms National Park.

At 1,748 square miles, the Cairngorms National Park is the largest in the UK, and is located in the Scottish Highlands, with Aberdeen an hour away by car from the east side of the park, and Inverness only 45 minutes from the west.

The park has four of the five highest mountains in the UK, and with 55 Munros (mountains over 915m in height) to tackle, it's a mecca for mountaineers.

There are 60 lochs and lots of lochans (little lochs) plus three major rivers, The Dee, The Don, and The Spey, offering first-class fishing for angling enthusiasts. With ancient woodlands, wetlands, and nature

Right: Polly and her dog, Effie, on a hike.

Far right: Polly and Effie enjoying the woods.

reserves, 49 per cent of the park has been recognised as being of international importance for nature and is protected by European Law.

The Cairngorms is also home to Balmoral Castle and the Braemar Royal Highland Gathering. Held on the first Saturday in September, the event draws visitors from all over the world to see caber tossing, highland dancing, and pipers in massed bands.

With so much to do and see, the area is very popular with travellers and holidaymakers and their dogs. Ranger Polly Freeman recommends four memorable walks for those planning to visit this beautiful area of Scotland.

WALK THIS WAY

Polly knows the park like the back of her hand. "I cover the whole park, welcoming visitors. We want them to have a good time but we also want them to look after the park. I chat to people with dogs and help them to care for the wildlife. I also do a lot of education work with children about nature and the environment.

"When walking in the Cairngorms the responsible thing to do is to have your dog on a lead most of the time because of the wildlife. But I have chosen walks that have areas where dogs can run off-lead because it's nicer for the owner and the dog.

"Three of the walks are waymarked so you shouldn't need detailed instructions, while the last one has clear paths.

"The national park is home to a quarter of the rare and endangered species in the UK, so being a responsible dog owner is essential. In some areas, if your dog is prone to chase, then a long line would be OK. But in the forests or areas where there are capercaillie then you need to keep your dog on a short lead. These areas are clearly signposted."

BRAEMAR RIVERSIDE WALK

"This is a great spot for dogs," explained Polly. "They can go in the River Dee to cool off. There are some breeding ducks on the river so make sure your dog doesn't disturb them."

The walk, which is clearly waymarked, lasts around two hours, starting and finishing from the public car park on the A93, near the Invercauld Arms.

"The path is safe to let dogs off the lead because the river is on one side and it is fenced on the other," said Polly. "The route is quite flat so it's suitable for every ability though it is uneven in places.

"This walk offers a lovely view of the River Dee on its way to Aberdeen from the Cairngorm mountains, which you can see on the left. Though you aren't in the mountains you are on the edge of them so you get a real sense of place.

"There is a dog-friendly cafe in the village of Braemar called The Bothy for refreshments at the end."

The area is busy in summer and most weekends so keep your dog on a lead through the village.

BALLATER – 7 BRIDGES WALK

This five-mile walk meanders through woodland and follows the course of the River Dee.

"The walk is fairly flat and accessible in all seasons so is suitable for all skill levels," said Polly.

This circular walk starts and finishes in the car park by Ballater's railway station and is clearly waymarked. Walk along the road towards Braemar before turning left by the church and then right (by a waymark) into woods. After about

Right: The stunning landscape of the Cairngorms.

Image: VisitScotland/ Jakub Iwanicki.

Right: Looking towards Meall a' Bhuachaille.

Image: VisitScotland/ Jakub Iwanicki.

Main image: A view of the mountains near Glenmore.

Image: Cairngorms Business Partnership.

a mile, follow the left-hand route, which runs alongside the river.

"You need to keep your dog on a lead through the pine woods because of ground-nesting birds," advised Polly, "though the rest of the walk can be off-lead."

"The walk does cross seven bridges and there's a lovely suspension bridge called Polhollick, which is perfectly safe but has a long span and can wobble, especially if there's more than one person on it, so watch your dog."

GLEN BANVIE AND BRUAR CIRCUIT

The Glen Banvie walk is a nine-mile scenic route through a varied landscape starting either in Blair Atholl (walking the first half mile along a quiet road) or parking in the Old Bridge of Tilt car park where the route is signposted into a wood, then follows a gorge.

"This is a good, wide path," Polly explained, "but be aware that there are steep drops to the side in one section so keep your dog on a lead or under close control. At the end of the gorge, the path opens onto beautiful moorland where deer roam free so please be responsible and don't allow your dog to run wild. Keep your dog close or on a lead if he is likely to chase deer or birds."

The path follows a gradual incline over the moor before dropping down into the woods. At this point there is an optional detour to a series of waterfalls called the Falls of Bruar, which adds a mile onto the route. This detour carries on to a large country store, The House of Bruar, which has a huge restaurant with outside covered seating.

"I see lots of people with dogs there and it's a good stop for lunch if you don't fancy taking a picnic," said Polly. "The final section of this walk goes through farmland and, though the path is fenced off from the field, keep dogs under control so they can't jump the fence and frighten the livestock. The route then finishes where it started."

If you have time, why not visit nearby Blair Castle, which allows dogs on leads in the grounds?

MEALL A' BHUACHAILLE

Meall a' Bhuachaille is a mountain rising over 800m, which offers dog walkers an opportunity to experience the wild beauty of the Cairngorms without the need for mountaineering skills. Though the walk isn't waymarked it does have good paths and takes about three to four hours depending on fitness levels and length of stops.

"The view from the top is worth the climb," said Polly, "but it is very exposed and windy at all times of the year and much colder than at lower levels. I would recommend taking a waterproof coat and an extra layer of clothing as a minimum, plus a drink.

DOG WALKERS
ENTERING

Below left: There is clear signage for dog walkers.

Below right: In the UK, capercaillie can only be found in Scotland and mainly in suitable forest habitat.

Image: Mark Hamblin/ 2020VISION.

Right: The Green Lochan.

Image: VisitScotland/ Damian Shields.

Below: Keep dogs on leads to avoid disturbing groundnesting birds.

Image: CNPA.

"Bear in mind that phone signals are variable so don't plan to rely on your phone — take a map.

"This is the only walk which may be more difficult in winter so please ask locally about the conditions on the mountain before attempting to climb it in cold weather."

Starting in Glenmore, walk through the ancient Caledonian pine forest to the famous An Lochan Uaine or Green Lochan, which has stunning emerald green water.

"Rumour has it the fairies do their laundry in the loch!" laughed Polly.

STUNNING VIEWS OF THE CAIRNGORMS

Now follow the route to Ryvoan Bothy where a path on the left leaves the main track and goes up the hill. Follow this path, which is reasonably steep, to the top.

From here you have stunning views of the corries of the Cairngorms (armchair-shaped hollows high on a mountain with steep back and side walls where snow gathers and ice forms) and, on a clear day, a 360-degree view.

The circular walk takes you down the other side of the mountain. Look out for the young pine trees that are regenerating in the area now deer numbers are controlled.

Above right: Look out for red squirrels…

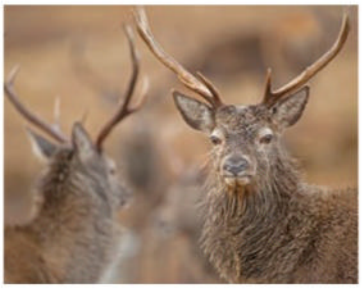
Image: Stewart Grant/CNPA.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

The area has ground-nesting birds, including capercaillie, which are particularly vulnerable to disturbance so it's essential dog owners take note of signs and put their dogs on leads if asked to do so.

Polly said: "Though there are wild deer, you are unlikely to see any, but you could see birds of prey and red squirrels, particularly in autumn. Autumn is also a good time to see some amazing fungi in Glenmore Forest where you may spot the bleeding tooth fungus!"

Dog owners should be aware that there are adders in the area.



Below right: …and wild deer roaming free.

Image: Cairngorms National Park Authority.

GOING PLACES

There is good public transport to all the towns and villages mentioned and dogs are allowed on buses. Parking is available, though Braemar can get very busy in the summer.

There are dog-friendly cafes and pubs as well as public toilets in the village.

THE AVIEMORE DOG PARK

If your dog has a strong chase drive, or doesn't have perfect recall, the Aviemore Dog Park offers an enclosed field on the edge of Aviemore, which you can hire by the hour. With agility equipment and toys, your dog can let off steam before heading out on a walk.

DISABLED ACCESS

Polly said: "The Cairngorms National Park is committed to making the walks as accessible as possible so, for example, you won't find many stiles on our paths. We are also committed to creating routes for disabled people."

● Find out more at www.cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/141211PathsWithEasyAccessV0.5.pdf

USEFUL INFO

● Scotland has different rules to England regarding walking in the countryside. For more information, visit www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/act-and-access-code

● For more information on walks, visit www.cairngorms.co.uk/discover-explore/things-to-do/walking-trails/community-paths-and-trails

● The four walks in this feature are covered in more detail at www.walkhighlands.co.uk

● For information for dog owners, including details of local vets, visit www.visitcairngorms.com/plan-your-visit/dog-friendly-cairngorms

IVY & DUKE

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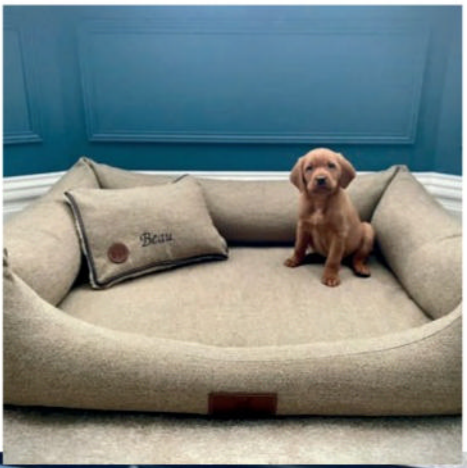

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Send us a picture and tell us all about your dog; share your views on what's happening in the dog world and the ups and downs of dog ownership; what do you think of our features and content and what would you like to see more of?

This is the place to be if you want to reach out to other Your Dog readers and the magazine team to share your love of everything dog. Get in touch!

Have your say!

The place to share your news and tell us what you think.

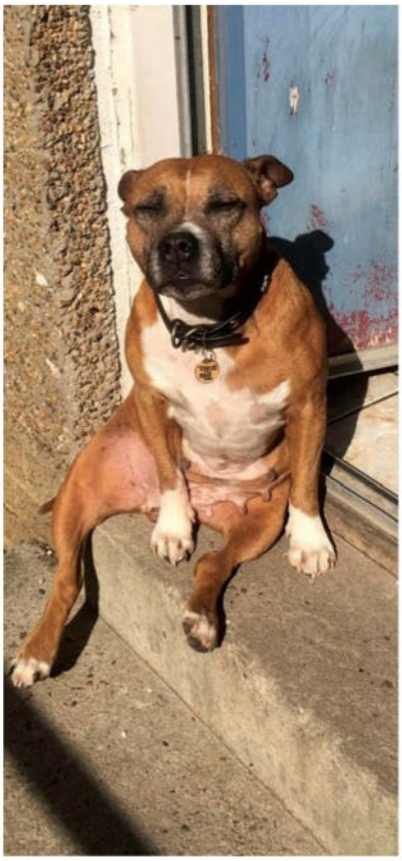
In memory of Kaiser

This is my girl, Kaiser, who sadly had to be put to sleep in January.

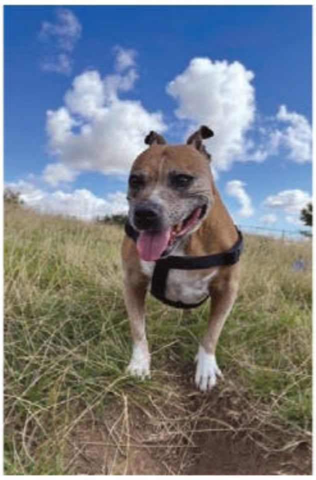
She was a happy, very much-loved dog and ever since puppyhood she had enjoyed long walks with the many doggy friends she had made over the years. She loved going to the beach, running into the water for a good soak, and chasing a ball. She was such a family dog and often joined us on family days out with my nieces and nephews, running alongside them. But she loved nothing more than being at home in her own garden basking in the sunshine.

She was an amazing big sister to her Jack Russell brother, Benny, who misses her so much. She got me through some sad times over the years; she'd give big kisses and cuddles when she knew you weren't feeling your best. She was such a big personality and is a great loss to us all.

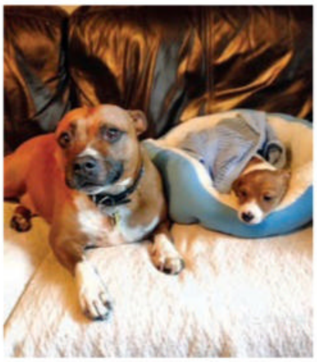
Gordon Rice, via email.



Right: Soaking up the sun — a favourite pastime.



Far right above: Kaiser was very lovable.



Far right below: Looking after baby brother Benny.

Above: Rescue pup Skippy.

YOUR DOG REVISITED

I grew up in the US and would buy Your Dog Magazine at our local store throughout my childhood/teen years with my babysitting money. Now, many years later, I'm all grown up, and living in Israel. I was delighted to learn I could subscribe and, once again, I am enjoying my monthly magazines very much.

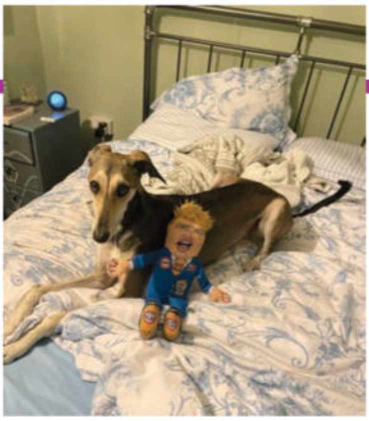
I would love to see my pup in Your Dog one of these days. He is a five-year-old cross-breed rescue pup named Skippy. My best guess is he's a mix of Papillon and Sheltie, but who knows?

Miriam Shechter, Sdei Trumot, Israel.

THE LONG ROAD...

My name is Tipsy and I am a rescued Saluki. I was found floating in the River Thames at four weeks old by a fisherman who caught me on a line and was surprised to find five pups inside a carrier bag.

We didn't all make it, but the RSPCA took me in and called me Jean. They renamed my sister Norma. I was so grateful to be alive. I had no fur as I had mange and I was so little that I was carried around in a backpack by the staff to keep me warm and safe. At four months, I was put up for adoption and that's where my life adventures started. Everything was so new and it was hard facing the challenges of the outside world — TV, what was that noise? And as for the shaking and rumbling of the washing machine,



Right: Tipsy loves Mum's bed.

I just hid. Being called Jean just wasn't me so following a discussion with my adopted parents, I became Tipsy. It's been a long road. I am coming up to two years, but I made some friends on a group called Rescue Saluki and they have helped me and Mum through my more challenging moments. I have learned that I like to dig holes, ruin Mum's garden, make friends, and love Mum's bed. I am here to tell this tale because of the help I have received from so many rescues. I hope others find the same.

Sandra Reid-Brown and Tipsy, via email.

ANY ADVICE?

I wonder if any of your readers can help me deal with what is a difficult situation — I know some of them will have had similar experiences and maybe could offer advice on the best way to manage this problem?

I have a very lovable but reactive cross-breed who can sometimes be aggressive towards other dogs, particularly adolescent males who rush in where angels fear to tread. They often want to play and be friendly, but all my dog wants is them to back off and leave him well alone.

The problem is that a lot of them don't and this results in my dog getting more and more wound up and more and more snappy in his bid to drive them away.

Recently, a new family moved into our road, who own a lovely 18-month-old Labrador-cross. Unfortunately, he is exactly the sort of dog my Buster feels uneasy about.

The other day we met them when we were walking our dogs in a local country park. This park is usually quite quiet and is an ideal space for exercising Buster. Unfortunately, not on this occasion.

As soon as I saw the family and their dog, I put Buster on the lead, which is what I always do when approaching other unknown dogs. But this dog was off-lead and heading straight towards us, and didn't pay much attention to his owners despite them attempting to call him back. As the dog got closer, and started to run faster and faster, I sensed Buster getting more and more upset. I tried to get him to walk behind my legs, but he had already started to growl under his breath, and I knew he was getting so wound up that he could no longer take in what I was saying.

Eventually, as the dog galloped towards us, I had no option. I stepped forward very deliberately with Buster behind me, stuck out my hand, giving the 'stop' signal, and shouted 'Stop' at the poor dog in my loudest voice. Strangely enough, I think my behaviour was so unexpected that he stopped in his tracks, but whether it was the right thing to do or whether it would work if I tried it again, I don't know.

I did get the chance to speak to the owners. At first, their response was that their dog was very friendly, but I had to explain to them that mine wasn't always, and I didn't want him harming or upsetting their dog or practising this aggressive behaviour.

We already have help at a local training class for Buster's reactivity but it isn't something that is going to be cured overnight, indeed if ever.

It's dealing with these unexpected outside encounters that is so difficult and the last thing you want to be doing is something that keeps reinforcing the reactive behaviour.

I'd be really interested to read about other readers' experiences with reactive dogs and how they have dealt with them. Also, how successful they have been.

Caroline Longworth, via email.

Right: Some dogs would prefer to be left alone.

SMELLY STUFF

I loved 'Your dog's super-sense!' *(Your Dog March issue)*. I was aware of dogs' extraordinary sense of smell but not so familiar with all the details of how their nostrils work, and how smells are collected — it was fascinating stuff and leaves me even more in awe of these amazing creatures who have so many talents!

It was also great food for thought — in terms of how we can use our understanding of our dogs' need to scent to benefit our relationship and look after our pets better.

Evie Waller, Hampshire.

Your dog's SUPER-SENSE!

There's no doubt about it — smell is hugely important to dogs. **Karen Bush** takes a closer look at how your dog's incredible nose works.

"...puppies begin using their sense of smell while still in the womb."

"The nostrils (or nares) can wiggle independently, which helps pick up on scents coming from different directions."

Right: From our March 2023 issue.

GET IN TOUCH

You can email your views, thoughts, and pics of your much-loved dogs (along with plenty of details) to sarah.wright@warnersgroup.co.uk, or if you'd prefer, you can still send a letter to our postal address on page 5, or post a comment on social media. The editor reserves the right to edit anything submitted.

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Perfect partners

Assistance dog charity Canine Partners trains dogs to carry out a multitude of tasks, from closing doors to pulling off socks, assisting disabled people in all aspects of their lives. **Elizabeth Denholm** finds out more.

Above: Canine Partners' Gemma Collins with a dog in advanced training.

Right: Jess and Xolani on a walk together.

Images: Canine Partners.

Most people don't give a second thought to simple tasks such as picking up dropped car keys or loading the washing machine, but for 44-year-old Jess Barnes, who lives in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, these tasks are physically debilitating and that's where her assistance dog, yellow Labrador Xolani, steps in to help.

Above: Jess and Xolani in their garden.

> “One day, I turned around and Xolani was trying to put the washing on the airer as well, because she had watched and learned that’s where I would put it next!”

Q What health issues do you have?

A “I’ve had asthma since I was a child and in 2006 I was in hospital with a respiratory arrest and I was diagnosed with brittle asthma.

“Then, unrelated to the asthma, I was diagnosed in 2011 with idiopathic intracranial hypertension and a clotting disorder. I had numerous clots around my body and an increase in fluid on the brain, so I had a shunt put in. I’m on lifelong blood-thinners and have a home-testing machine to check my clotting levels.

“In 2014, I developed cauda equina syndrome, which affects the nerves in the spine. I’ve got no feeling in my left leg. I’m in constant pain — like a sciatic pain — and have to use walking aids. I’ve had 24 operations in two-and-a-half years.”

Q What job do you do?

A “I used to be a hospital operating department practitioner but had to give that up.

“Last September I was appointed disability development manager at the Russell Martin Foundation, which offers multi-sports for children and adults with disabilities.

“I run sports sessions in schools. One school has severely disabled children and just getting a smile out of these kids is so rewarding. I also visit mainstream schools giving talks about disability. And I coach an under-15 girls football team.”

Q How does your disability affect you?

A “I don’t want to let things affect me. I grit my teeth and carry on because there’s nothing I can do about it, but sometimes I have to take more painkillers. You do get days when you have had enough.

“I had to have part of my spine fused and though I can bend down it exacerbates the pain, which is very tiring.”

Q Why did you consider applying for an assistance dog?

A “Mum was coming to help with simple things — emptying the bin and the cat litter tray — but I was getting more tired. I was using energy picking things up because I drop things all the time. It’s silly things but if you bend down 10 times a day it’s really tiring. You’re in pain and the fatigue really mounts up.

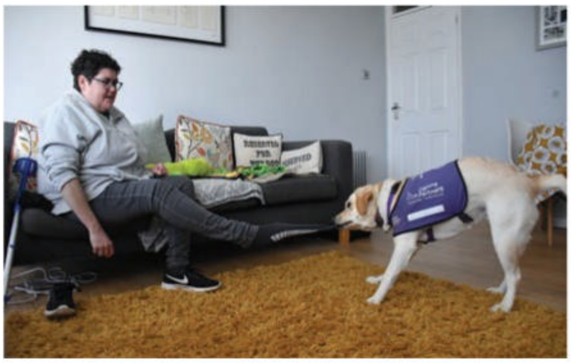
“Canine Partners is my nearest assistance dog organisation and I sent in an application. I didn’t think I would qualify because I wasn’t in a wheelchair.”

Q How were you assessed as a potential partner?

A “There are several different stages of assessment. Canine Partners has your medical information as well as assessing you at home. These dogs are highly trained and must go to people who genuinely need them.

“Recently the criteria has changed so new applicants understand the implications before they apply. Some people think the dogs are robots and can do everything. And that they won’t need to walk or groom them or do training with the dog. I was fully aware I was going to have to put some effort in.”

Right top: Play is an important part of downtime.



Right bottom: Xolani removes Jess’s sock.

Q What was your reaction on meeting your first assistance dog?

A "You meet for the first time at a matching visit and Canine Partners warns you that you might not connect with the dog. I got my first dog, a Flat Coated Retriever called Xenna, in 2014. She came bounding into the room and I really wasn't expecting that. I thought the dog would be calm and under control. But the attraction was instant and she genuinely changed my life."

Q How is the dog trained to meet your specific needs?

A "Once you are matched, Canine Partners checks if there are any specific tasks that the partner may need. The dog has already learned obedience training and core skills such as opening doors, retrieving the phone, pressing lift buttons, and unloading a washing machine. The trainer came to my home each day for two weeks to refine the training to my needs. They also came to assess me at work."

Q How does an assistance dog help you?

A "Xolani fills and empties the washing machine. One day, I turned around and Xolani was trying to put the washing on the airer as well, because she had watched and learned that's where I will put it next!

"There are specific commands for different tasks, though you do have to direct the dog. To get the washing out of the washing machine I will say 'get it' and if Xolani is finding it difficult to get the clothes out of the machine I say 'tug, tug' to pull harder, then 'bring it here'.

"Xolani closes the front door by pulling a ball on a rope attached to the door. She can also push buttons to open doors; remove socks, shoes, and hats, and will help me take off my jumper.

"Xenna didn't like the taste of metal in her mouth so I put a tag on my keys for her to pick up whereas Xolani doesn't mind. Xolani also picks up the post.

"Xenna was trained to use the emergency alarm button, but she was too anxious and would press it if I was coughing too much but didn't actually need emergency assistance!"

Q How do you care for Xolani?

A "She puts her bowl away in the cupboard when she has finished eating. I'm trying to teach her to open the drawer to get her bowl out but there is a risk she will go and get the bowl every time she fancies some food. I put her food bowl on a small stool which means I don't have to bend down as far.

"Xolani jumps on the sofa for me to groom her but she's short-haired so doesn't need much grooming.

"I walk Xolani using my stick or my walker, but I do have people who will walk her if I need them to.

"All the dogs are trained to toilet on command and partners will have designated areas in their garden. I have a communal garden but there's a strip at the side I use where Xolani defecates.

"We have to be aware of their needs. One time, Xenna went in the sea and then on the way home I popped into a supermarket, but I hadn't realised that the saltwater had affected her bowels and didn't give her a chance to toilet. So, she did a poo in the middle of the supermarket. I was very, very apologetic and mortified because it wasn't her fault it was my fault, which is usually the case when a dog does something wrong."

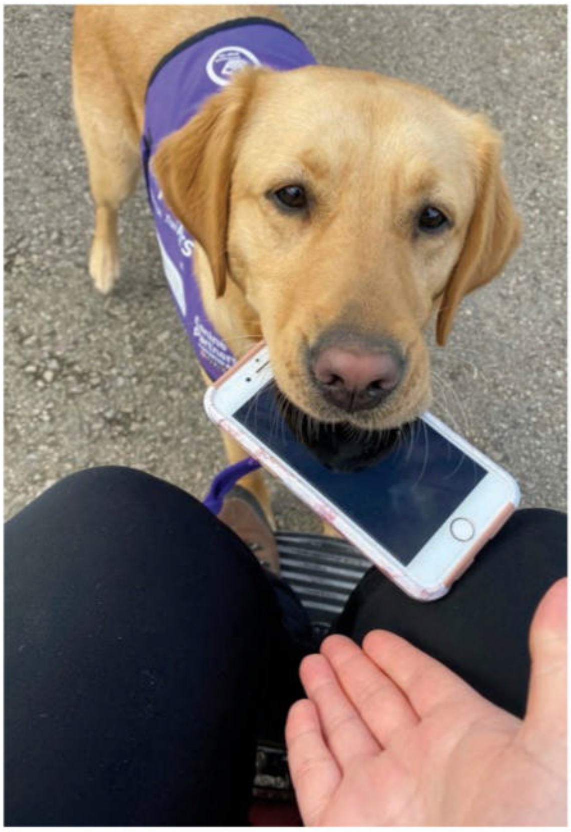
Q What is a successor dog?

A "When a dog retires the replacement dog is called a successor dog. Xenna was ill so she had to retire and

Below left: Dogs assist in shops as well as in the home.

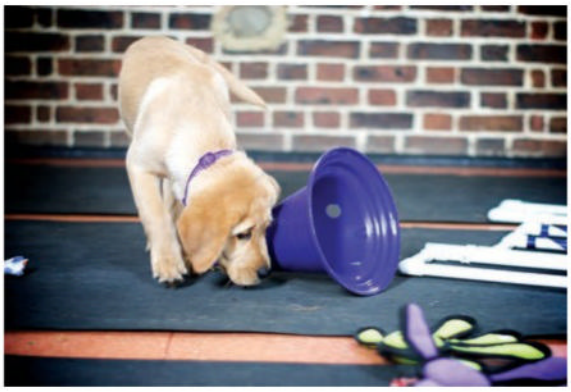
Below right: Vanilla retrieves a mobile phone.

"It's the best thing I could have done — that's where my journey started."



Right: Advanced trainer Gemma Collins outside the Midlands Training Centre.

Below: At puppy class the dogs start to develop their skills.



went to live with my mother. Sadly, she died a few weeks ago at the age of nine.

"I got Xolani in April last year and she is such a different dog to Xenna so I have to learn new things. There are expectations when you have a successor dog because you think 'well, my last dog used to do this so why can't this one?' I always say to Xolani 'you've got big paws to fill.'"

Q How have your dogs helped you?

A "The psychological impact of having a dog is amazing — I wouldn't be where I am today, working and doing things like this interview.

"For years my confidence was so low. I would get anxious and feel vulnerable and I wouldn't go out on my own. Then, you take the dog out and start speaking to people because they see the assistance dog jacket. My confidence increased massively and I started volunteering at the Sussex Football Disability League. I'm far more independent which means it's helped my family as well. It's the best thing I could have done — that's where my journey started."

Canine Partners

- **Founded in 1990, Canine Partners trains dogs to assist people with a wide range of disabilities such as cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy as well as people with spinal injuries or who have suffered a stroke.**
- **It costs £30,000 to train a dog from when he starts his puppy training to his retirement.**
- **There are currently 400 working partnerships across the UK.**
- **Canine Partners relies on hundreds of volunteers including brood volunteers (who look after the puppies' mothers), puppy parents (who look after the puppies' initial training), and fosterer volunteers (who take over and care for the puppies during advanced training). The charity is always looking for more people to help support its work.**
- **Canine Partners' dogs can be trained to do a range of tasks including helping to strip the bed, flush the toilet, and put their toys away.**
- **Canine Partners trains Labradors, Golden Retrievers, or crosses of these breeds, as well as some Poodle-crosses for people who may have allergies.**

MORE INFO

To find out more, visit www.caninepartners.org.uk

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Holiday homework!

Ensure that both you and your dog really do get the most out of your time away and create memories to cherish, says **Karen Bush.**

Preparation is everything when it comes to taking a break with your dog. Doing your homework and thoroughly researching the areas you fancy visiting can make all the difference.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

You may have somewhere in mind that you've always wanted to visit, but if you aren't sure, recommendations from friends and family may give you a few ideas.

Social media can throw up some great suggestions too — although bear in mind that what constitutes a brilliant holiday for someone else's dog may not match your own dog's idea of a good time.

Be prepared to do plenty of

> “Wherever you go should have something to offer both you and your dog...”

Right: Prepare yourselves for a memorable break.

AVAXHOME -

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

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TOP TIP!
Plan your more active outings during the earlier part of the day so your dog can let off a bit of steam; he'll then be more settled if you want to visit attractions, stop off at a pub or cafe for refreshments, or simply indulge in a bit of 'loafing around' time.

Rght: There are lots of beautiful places to explore in the UK, including the Lake District.

Below: Taking in the views across the city of Edinburgh from the top of Arthur's Seat.

Bottom: The famous statue of Greyfriars Bobby in Edinburgh.

research on locations before you book any accommodation, as it can really spoil your holiday if you arrive and have no idea where to go, or which places your dog will be welcome at. Wherever you do decide to go should have something to offer both you and your dog, including walks and dog-friendly accommodation, places to eat, and attractions to visit.

GREYFRIARS BOBBY
34 CANDLEMAKER ROW

> **"Your dog can enjoy watching the countryside (and wildlife!)..."**

As well as influencing your choice of location, this means you can plan a variety of options for days out, which you can then pick from depending on the weather, your mood, and activity levels! Distance may also play a factor in your decision; if your dog isn't a great traveller, you may prefer to go somewhere that's not too far from where you live.

Part of the fun of going on holiday is, of course, the opportunity to explore new areas, sights, and sounds, but don't assume you can take your dog everywhere, and bear in mind that dog-friendly attractions may not be open all year round. Similarly, if you really fancy a seaside break and are looking forward to checking out rockpools and paddling with your pet, then find out whether the local beaches you want to visit will be open to dogs; some may also have restrictions at certain times of the day.

CITY BREAKS

While exploring the countryside or wandering along the coastline may be a perfect way to spend vacation time with your dog, if you're planning a short holiday, don't rule out the idea of a city break. Edinburgh, for example, was named the UK's most dog-friendly tourist location in 2021, with plenty of pubs and cafes that welcome canines, and activities such as climbing to the top of Arthur's Seat, the extinct volcano at the edge of the city centre, or visiting the statue of Greyfriars Bobby. There are plenty of other cities you might like to visit, and they may surprise you in just how much they have to offer your canine friend as well as you.

TAKING TO THE WATER

Not all holidays need be taken on dry land — taking to the water on a boating holiday along a canal can make for a relaxing break with a difference. Although you are on the move, it is a lovely slow pace of life, where you can eat, sleep, and stop when you feel like it. Your dog can enjoy watching the countryside (and wildlife!) as it drifts slowly past, or walk with you on the towpath alongside the boat — because canal boats only travel at around 3 – 4mph it's not hard to keep up. As a bonus, many of the canal-side pubs are dog friendly, so you can enjoy refreshments along the way.

Of course, this sort of holiday may not be for every dog — some may find the noise alarming and a few

“The internet makes finding dog-friendly pubs and eating places easy...”

Right: If you’re planning a holiday on water, invest in a lifejacket for your dog.

CEASE FIRING

Far right: A boating holiday on the canals can be a relaxing break.

TOP TIP!

As canal banks are steep and offer no purchase for your dog to scramble out by himself, it’s a wise precaution to kit him out in a doggy lifejacket just in case he falls in. Even the strongest of swimmers can get exhausted and it will help keep his head above water while you extract him. A lifejacket will also have a handle, which will give you something to hold onto — a wet dog weighs a lot and may not be easy to get hold of!

may suffer from motion sickness — but most dogs do take to the nautical life quite quickly. However, if you’re not sure whether it’s something your dog will enjoy, try booking a day or weekend outing as a taster.

FINDING OUT MORE

As well as looking online, your local tourist information office and library can be helpful sources of information on areas you’re interested in visiting. There are also many books featuring dog-friendly walks, which can be great starting points for exploring a new area.

EATING OUT

Food is something else you’ll want to give some consideration to; as well as looking for nice picnic areas, there may be days when you fancy a change from ‘sarnies’ and want to treat yourself to afternoon teas and meals out. The internet makes finding dog-friendly pubs and eating places easy these days, although do check in advance to see what the policy is on dogs being allowed inside. Eating outdoors can be lovely in fine weather, but if it unexpectedly turns wet or cold, it’s good to know ahead of arriving whether your dog will be welcome indoors. If your dog isn’t accustomed to this sort of situation it may be hard for him to cope — all those people, all that noise, and all

Above right: Check with cafes and bars whether your dog is allowed inside.

Right: Truly dog-friendly pubs may have lots of facilities for your pet.

Above: Get your dog used to cafe visits prior to your holiday.

that food! Spend some time before your holiday teaching him a 'settle' and take him on a few local outings, so it's something he's familiar with.

HOME OR AWAY?

Whatever your tastes, you are spoilt for choice when it comes to places to take your dogs on holiday within the UK, but if you are set on taking your pet abroad, be aware that the old Pet Passport Scheme ceased in January 2021. Instead you'll now need an Animal Health Certificate (AHC) issued by an 'official veterinarian' (OV), which must be used within 10 days of being issued. This will require that your pet has a valid rabies vaccination and tapeworm treatment. When visiting other countries, there may also be additional disease risks to your dog. There are different rules for taking your pet to EU and non-EU countries, and the laws on dog ownership can also vary between different countries; for instance, some require that dogs are muzzled in public, so doing your homework in advance really is essential. You should also check as to whether your dog's insurance will cover him while abroad.

● **Find out more at www.gov.uk/taking-your-pet-abroad**

WHEN TO GO?

Avoid planning breaks with your dog during the hottest times of the year. If you can be flexible in when you take your holiday, then going in the off-peak season has several advantages. As well as the weather being cooler, accommodation is usually cheaper, and tourist attractions are likely to be less crowded. Beaches are also more likely to be open to dogs.

"The UK has really caught up with the Continent in terms of being dog friendly..."

Case study

TRAVELS WITH CHARLIE

"We didn't want to leave Charlie behind — he'd never been in kennels and we didn't want him to have to be, when he could join us on holiday instead," said Caroline Davies, from Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire. Consequently, eight-year-old Charlie has become a veteran of family holidays, and in the past has accompanied the Davies family abroad to Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxembourg. "He's loved being with us, and especially adored running around on the French beaches," recalled Caroline. "On the whole travelling abroad was fairly straightforward, apart from the homeward leg from Belgium, which was memorable for all the wrong reasons. Finding a vet who could complete the paperwork and give the medications was difficult, and when we did track one down, he was only open for 11 hours a week, which rather complicated matters. He then also had to sacrifice his chicken sandwich lunch in order to persuade Charlie to swallow the wormer!"

Nowadays Charlie and the Davies family visit destinations closer to home in the UK, including Devon, Cornwall, and the Lake District: "The UK has really caught up with the Continent in terms of being dog friendly," explained Caroline. "We've stayed in dog-friendly rentals ranging from a farmhouse annexe to cottages, and done some caravanning. Having Charlie, and takIng into account his requirements as well as ours, has encouraged us to take breaks in places we wouldn't have otherwise gone to — and we've had the most brilliant times."

Right: Caroline with Charlie.

YOUR DOG MEMBERSHIP

Join the Your Dog Membership and you can benefit from hundreds of discounts and offers on dog-friendly accommodation when planning your holiday with your dog. To find out how you can become a member and more about what the membership can offer you, turn to page 52.

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Seeing is believing!

Jack Russell Terrier Franky has amazed everyone with the ease and speed at which he's adapted to life without sight. **Joanne Bednall** reports.

Top: Franky made a quick recovery.

Above: Franky and Hollie have attended local shows together with great success.

Right: Franky was soon playing ball again.

"There's only one Franky!" laughed Hollie Griffin, when asked to describe her once-in-a-lifetime dog.

"I know everyone thinks their dog is special but Franky is the most loving, intelligent, placid, and well-behaved dog you could ever wish to meet."

The construction project manager, 38, and her partner, Justin Phillimore, 39, have owned their nine-year-old Jack Russell Terrier since he was a puppy.

Hollie says that Franky was in excellent health until 2019 when a routine vet check changed everything.

"While we were on holiday seeing family in Cornwall, we took Franky for an anal gland appointment," recalled Hollie, who lives in Didsbury, Manchester. "The vet spotted early signs of cataracts in one eye but suggested we left it for the time being."

In August 2020, the couple noticed Franky was starting to bump into unfamiliar objects on walks.

After taking him to their local vet's, he was referred to Eye Vet, a Linnaeus-owned ophthalmology referral centre based in Sutton Weaver, Cheshire.

"There, Franky was diagnosed with just 20 per cent vision in each eye," continued Hollie, who, although shocked, was encouraged by the practice's positive prognosis.

"He underwent a straightforward cataract procedure on each eye, and was sent home both times with drops, steroids, and pain relief. He recovered well and his sight came back."

But just when Hollie and Justin thought Franky's eye problems were behind him, he took a sudden and worrying turn for the worse. They woke one morning to find their dog's left eye bulging, blue, and cloudy.

"We rang Eye Vet and they said to bring Franky straight in," said Hollie, who was told the pressure in his eye had skyrocketed. "We weren't sure if it was part of the recovery process from the cataracts procedure or the start of glaucoma."

Franky was prescribed six different eye drops, which had to be administered three or four times a day — a strict regime that Hollie stuck to religiously during lockdown.

Although the medication seemed to be managing Franky's condition, the pressure in his eye was still high at his next check-up.

"So a shunt was recommended to help relieve the pressure on his eyeball," explained Hollie. "But this

Right: Franky and Hollie enjoying an outing together.

Far right: Hollie was amazed by how well Franky was able to cope out on walks.

> "I know everyone thinks their dog is special but Franky is the most loving, intelligent, placid, and well-behaved dog you could ever wish to meet."

only proved effective for about 10 days before we were told that removal of his eye was the only remaining option."

After everything Franky had been through, Hollie and Justin were heartbroken. "We were devastated," continued Hollie. "Franky's eyes were his character and we had fought so hard to save his left eye. But by now, he was staring at the floor in so much pain. The vet explained that it would have been the equivalent of a human having a constant, severe migraine. We didn't want him to suffer any longer."

FRANKY'S RELIEF

Within 24 hours, Franky had undergone surgery to remove his left eye, but Hollie was amazed when she went to collect him.

"He was so excited to see me and was wagging his tail; it was as if he was really pleased not to be in pain any more," said Hollie, who had been contemplating getting a puppy to keep Franky company.

Jack Russell X Border Terrier Dotty, who's now two, turned out to be a top decision as the two dogs have become the best of friends.

However, at Franky's next six-weekly check-up on his right eye, which was still being treated with daily drops, there was yet more bad news. Just three months after his surgery, the couple were told the pressure was up in this eye.

"Our hearts sank and we thought: 'here we go again'," says Hollie, who was advised to increase the number of drops in his eye to 36 a day. But just four weeks later, the couple were told the medication was no longer working and his right eye would have to be removed, too.

"Obviously, we were devastated and extremely worried about Franky's quality of life moving forward," continued Hollie, who felt guilty that her decision to opt for cataract surgery may have triggered the glaucoma. "But the vet said that it was just bad luck and we had tried absolutely everything to save his sight. Franky was only eight years old and still had a lot of life ahead of him, but his little world was going to be completely different from now on; we did not know how he would cope." Hollie made sure she took lots of photos of Franky before he underwent surgery. "I was scared he wouldn't be little Franky again. I kept saying to him: 'I'm so sorry, Franky'. It was awful. The process from diagnosis to his second surgery had been long, labour-intensive and very stressful.

"But when I went to collect him afterwards, exactly the same thing happened — the vet's door flew open and out came a happy Franky, wagging his tail and jumping up. I was amazed.

"Incredibly, he made a quick recovery and suddenly there was no more medication, no more pain."

Hollie and Justin were determined Franky would lead a normal life so they let him navigate his new world in his own time. "We didn't want to help him too much — he's an independent dog anyway — but we made sure we didn't change his routine or move any furniture in the house," she explained.

"Within the first couple of hours of Franky being home, he managed to find his way from the sofa in the lounge to the kitchen for a drink. We knew then that he was going to be OK.

"He went in and out of the garden, navigated pavements on walks and even found his ball, which he was super-happy to be reunited with! We've since bought him balls that whistle when you throw them — he loves listening, then sniffing them out."

Hollie says that interestingly, on walks, Franky always follows the sound of their feet, which he finds easier in summer when they are wearing flip-flops.

"He also follows the sound of our baby JP's pushchair, but does get confused if we pass other pushchairs," explained Hollie, who says that Dotty looks after Franky too, and has given him a whole new lease of life.

"A year on and we forget now that Franky is blind. He leads such a normal and active life and is happy to jump on and off the sofa and out of the car. The only thing he won't do is come downstairs."

Hollie and Justin are hugely grateful for the care and support provided throughout their ordeal by Eye Vet.

"The team was so supportive medically, professionally, and personally and very caring and patient, especially given the endless number of questions we asked throughout the process," added Hollie, who is thrilled their special terrier still enjoys competing at local dog shows, where he recently added 'Best Looking Dog' and 'Best Veteran' to his rosette collection.

Bring on the Bloodhounds!

How a string of grisly murders in Victorian London led to dogs playing a crucial role as crime-fighting canines.

In October 1888 the Whitechapel district of London was in the grip of fear. A series of brutal murders had shocked the community — even those inhabitants accustomed to the depravity and criminal activity rife in the area.

The first of what became known as the 'Whitechapel murders' took place in April 1888, and during August and September events escalated, with five further victims being killed and horribly mutilated, leading to understandable panic.

This was further whipped up by extensive and lurid newspaper coverage, and after a letter received by the Central News Agency and signed 'Jack the Ripper' threatened more murders, there was rioting and attacks on any individual who might be a suspect.

The press was scathing in its criticism of the police's apparent inability to either identify suspects or make any discoveries that might lead to the perpetrator being apprehended. But the police were in fact trying their best in difficult circumstances: a team of policemen conducted house-to-house enquiries throughout Whitechapel, more than 2,000 people were interviewed, over 300 were actively investigated, and forensic material was gathered and examined. This was also the first time that criminal profiling was carried out.

Nevertheless, the newspapers continued to paint a picture of incompetence, and having caught the attention and imagination of the public nationwide, around 1,200 letters were being sent daily to the police, containing ideas as to how the murderer might be caught. Around a third of these suggested that hounds might succeed where the police had so far failed.

The Police Commissioner, Sir Charles Warren, was dubious about the effectiveness of this course of action but, despite his reservations, bowed to pressure. Until now, dogs had been borrowed from private owners when needed for police work, but he proposed that the best

Right: Edwin Brough with one of his Bloodhounds.

Image: Courtesy of Alamy Stock Photo. More details at www.alamy.com

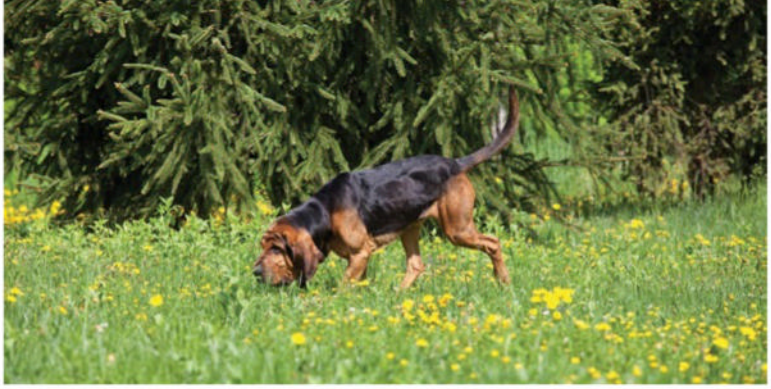
Top right: The Bloodhound — 'a dog attached to a nose'!

Middle right: Sir Charles Warren, Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, trialling Bloodhounds in Hyde Park.

Image: Courtesy of Alamy Stock Photo. More details at www.alamy.com

Far right: A replica of the 'Illustrated Police News' front page from October 1888, showing investigations linked to the Whitechapel murders, including the trialling of Bloodhounds.

Image: Courtesy of Alamy Stock Photo. More details at www.alamy.com



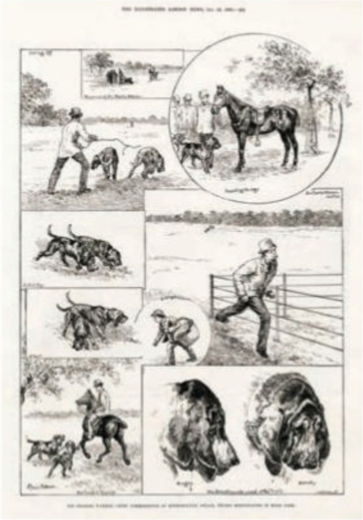
strategy would be to buy a couple of dogs who could then be kennelled at one of the London police stations, so they'd be ready to hand, without delay, the moment their services were required. Bloodhounds were suggested as being ideal — a breed that has been described as 'a dog attached to a nose', and which reigns supreme in its tracking abilities.

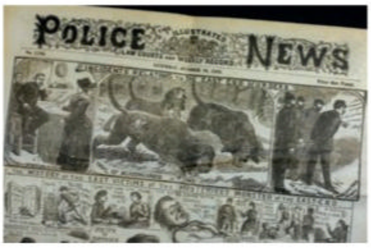
Although he shared the commissioner's doubts about how successful they would be in the busy environs of London, Edwin Brough, an experienced and world-renowned breeder from Scarborough, stepped forward, volunteering two of his best hounds, a pair named Burgho and Barnaby.

The 'Illustrated London News' followed this development with interest, reporting approvingly that: "Burgho is nearly two years younger than his kennel companion, and he is one of the fastest hounds Brough has ever bred. Burgho has been trained from a puppy to 'hunt the clean shoe' — that is to say, follow the trail of a man whose shoes have not been prepared in any way by the application of blood or aniseed, so as to leave a strongly marked trail. Barnaby has been similarly taught, but his training was not commenced until he was 12 months old. The hounds have been accustomed to working together, a considerable advantage in following a trail."

UP TO THE JOB?

Before committing to purchase however, Warren first asked that the hounds be trialled to ensure they would be up to the job. Arriving in London at the beginning of October, they were put through their paces in Regent's Park and Hyde Park, tracking the scents of subjects who had been given 15-minute head starts. Despite a thick coating of hoar frost on the ground, the dogs were successful each time during a variety of conditions — loose, on the lead, in the dark during the early hours of the morning, and even when the trail had been crossed. Sir Charles undertook the role of hunted man in several of the drills: Burgho and Barnaby tracked him down, expressing their delight on running him to ground by leaping up and attempting to lick his face. Not having thought to enquire beforehand what the dogs would do when they caught their quarry, Sir Charles apparently remained remarkably calm in the circumstances until the pair were called off, but later confided to a friend that it was not the happiest few minutes of his life.





POLICE NEWS

Despite the success of the trials, many newspapers published inaccurate and farcical reports, which were promptly repeated and used to mock Warren and the police force: one tale told of how when let loose after Jack, the dogs hunted down the commissioner instead. Another claimed that after being called out on assignment, they got lost in a fog, and were now missing, with the 'Pall Mall Gazette' mischievously adding that: "all constables have been instructed to apprehend all vagrant Bloodhounds and bid them stand in the name of Sir Charles Warren".

Following the trials, Brough returned to Scarborough, leaving the dogs in the care of a friend and experienced handler, while waiting for the police to negotiate a price for Burgho and Barnaby. But days and then weeks passed and no assurances were forthcoming about either purchasing or hiring the pair, let alone insuring them against any harm that might befall them in pursuit of the murderer. Concerned for their well-being, at the end of October Brough took Burgho to a dog show in Brighton and then returned home with him, where he was joined soon after by Barnaby.

> **"…many newspapers published inaccurate and farcical reports…"**

Their departure from Whitechapel was widely announced in the press, but the information apparently bypassed the police. When, shortly afterwards, one of the most grisly murders took place, the inspector in charge ordered that the scene should not be touched until the hounds had been brought to catch the murderer's scent. They waited two hours before finding out the dogs were no longer in London.

Jack the Ripper was never caught, and although there have been many theories, his identity still remains a mystery. In an interview some years after the murders, Brough pointed out that Burgho and Barnaby had not failed in their mission to catch him, rather that they "…were not put to the test so far as the Whitechapel murders were concerned, for no murder was committed during the time the hounds were in London," adding: "This I consider some evidence of the deterrent effect which the Bloodhounds would have on crime." Although they may not have had the chance to prove their worth other than as a deterrent, their brief sojourn with the boys in blue did have some positive consequences. While the purchase fell through, it created a precedent for dedicated crime-fighting canines becoming an integral part of the police force in years to come.

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● **Available from: wilsonspetfood.co.uk**

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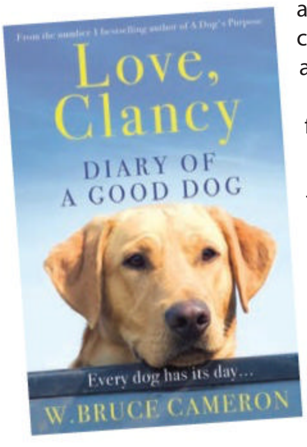
THE LIFE AND LOVES OF LABRADOR CLANCY


From the number 1 bestselling author of A Dog's Purpose
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W. BRUCE CAMERON

Penned by number one 'New York Times' best-selling author W. Bruce Cameron, 'Love Clancy — Diary of A Good Dog' is a mesmerising tale about the unique and special connection between humans and their dogs.

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● **Key feature: Michigan-born W. Bruce Cameron is the internationally best-selling author of 'A Dog's Purpose', 'A Dog's Way Home', 'A Dog's Journey', 'The Dog Master', and 'The Dogs of Christmas'. His nationally syndicated newspaper column in the US is read by more than three million readers every week. He lives in California.**

● **Price: £9.99 (paperback), published by Pan Macmillan.**

● **Available from: All good book shops and online.**

NOURISHING SHAMPOOS

Herbal pet-care experts at Dorwest Herbs have launched a new range of pet shampoo bars.

Made using 100 per cent natural ingredients, the shampoos have a base blend of coconut oil, shea butter, and sunflower, castor, and sweet almond oils to support skin and coat health. They are easy to use and rinse, with no residue left behind, and suitable for all coat types. The new range includes Fox & Flea Shampoo Bar, Soft & Serene Shampoo Bar, and Natural & Naked Shampoo Bar.

● **Key features: Dorwest's shampoo bars are completely plastic free and have 100 per cent recyclable packaging. They're ideal for travelling, being small and easy to pack with no risks of leaking, and they are free from artificial colours and fragrances.**

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with Lamb and rosemary
Vale Pet Foods
Tasty Training Treats
with Duck, Ox liver and sweet potato

TOP TREATS!

Leicestershire-based Vale Pet Foods has added three flavours of air-dried natural dog training treats to its growing product range.

The up-and-coming company, which manufactures grain and gluten-free dry food, raw recipes, and natural treats, was founded by husband and wife dog trainers Luke and Mairi Chapman, to provide canine customers with a naturally wholesome diet, packed with a healthy source of protein and important oils and minerals.

● **Key features: Bursting with vital nutrients to benefit overall good health, all treats contain sweet potato, the finest ingredients, and meat sourced from the human food chain.**

● **Flavours: Tasty Training Treats with Duck and Ox Liver, Calming Turkey Treats with Chamomile and Lavender, and Super Sausage Treats with Lamb and Rosemary.**

● **Price: £4.99 (100g or eight sausages).**

● **Available from: www.valepetfoods.com**

AWARD-WINNING RAW RECIPES

Nutritionists at sustainable raw food manufacturer Rawgeous, a silver award winner at the 2022 PetQuip Awards, have developed a range of tasty new recipes aimed at keeping dogs fit and healthy.

Rawgeous raw dog food includes the highest quality, human-grade cuts of Irish prime meat, along with fresh vegetables, seaweed, an organic kefir probiotic, and six omega oils.

All packaging is sustainable, 100 per cent plastic-free, and made from Woolcool, an insulating natural 'smart fibre'.

● **Key feature: Rawgeous Pet Food was the first in Ireland to be 100 per cent traceable from farm to bowl, and tests every batch before it leaves its licensed premises.**

● **Flavours: Chicken, beef, turkey, salmon, and duck, with special mixed diets for dogs with allergies and specific requirements.**

● **Sizes: Pack sizes come in 500g or 1kg, while boxes contain 4kg, 8kg, 12kg, 20kg, or 40kg.**

● **Price: From £35 for a 4kg box (8 x 500g or 4 x 1kg).**

● **Available from: www.rawgeouspetfood.com**

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● **Key feature: All treats are 100 per cent natural and grain free.**

● **Varieties: Dried Sprats, Whitefish Fingers, Salmon Cookies (with potato), Whitefish Cookies (with potato), Whitefish Cubes.**

● **Price: From £3.89 (75g resealable pouch).**

● **Available from: www.naturalcornishpet.co.uk**

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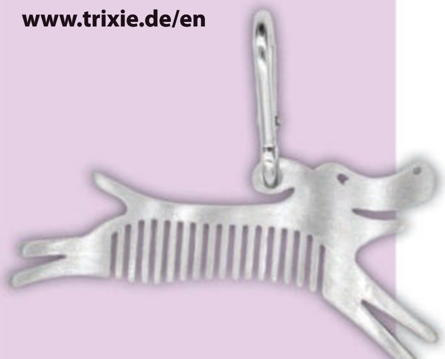
The furniture protector also features a waterproof underside, removable polyester cover, and a polyester fleece-filled rim.

● **Key feature: Measuring 70 X 90cm, the cover is washable at 40 degrees.**

● **Price: From £44.99.**

● **Available from: www.trixie.de/en**



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● **Key feature: This gentle, easy-to-use comb is perfect for unhooking unwanted hitchhikers and other debris in your dog's coat when walking, camping, or on holiday.**

● **Price: £7.**

● **Available from: www.kikkerlandeu.com/products/tick-tool**

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Dog Answers

Tips and advice from some of the top names in the dog world.

THE EXPERT PANEL

TAMSIN DURSTON is a canine behaviour officer in Dogs Trust's canine behaviour and research team.

TONY CRUSE is a member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers and the Institute of Modern Dog Trainers.

VICKY PAYNE BVetMed, MRCVS is a holistic vet based in East Sussex.

HOLLY MASH BVSc, MRCVS specialises in herbal medicine, acupuncture, and nutrition.

JOANNE ANGUS LCGI is a founder member of the Guild of Master Groomers.

JOHN BURNS BVMS, MRCVS is a vet, and founder of feed company Burns Pet Nutrition.

STEPHEN JENKINSON is access adviser to Your Dog, the Kennel Club, and local councils.

TRAINING

A GOOD START

Q When deciding on where to take my puppy for training, what qualifications, if any, should I look out for and expect the dog trainer to have?

Ronald James, Cumbria.

TONY SAYS: This is an excellent question. Unfortunately, the dog training industry still needs to be regulated and there needs to be a recognised standard. Currently, anyone can call themselves a dog trainer. A good dog trainer will have a knowledge of canine behaviour and be aware of the latest research on how dogs learn.

Years ago in classes, dogs were often dragged around on choke chains and physically punished if they barked or failed to respond. Fortunately, times have moved on, and we have learned more effective and kinder ways to train and bond with our pet dogs. There are a few organisations that have a strict code of conduct and assess their trainers. The APDT (Association of Pet Dog Trainers) and IMDT (Institute of Modern Dog Trainers) are two such organisations. They are both aware of the science of reward-based learning and should not employ force or anything considered aversive (something perceived as unpleasant by the dog).

Once you have found a dog training class online, arrange a visit without your dog so you can take a look at the class in action. Look at the dogs' body language. Do the dogs look like they are enjoying it? And let's not forget the owners — are they focused and enjoying it? Are the exercises working? Avoid any trainer who shouts at the dogs, uses water sprays, jerks the lead/line, or makes loud noises to punish them. Punishment causes hundreds of unwanted side effects, and we know that learning, for all species, should be fun!

Right: Choose a training class for your pup with care.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can find recommended classes from either of the recommended organisations' local registers; visit www.apdt.co.uk/find-a-trainer or www.imdt.uk.com/find-a-qualified-imdt-trainer.html

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HEALTH

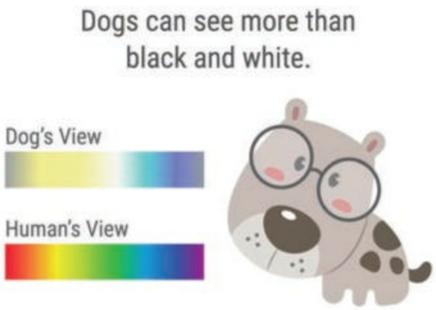
A GREY AREA

Q Which colours can our dogs see?

Lewis Mallard, Lancashire.

VICKY SAYS: Dogs are best described as red-green colour blind with these shades seen as shades of yellow. Blue and purple are visible to them as well as black and white.

Dogs see the world like a TV with the brightness turned up, and things look fuzzier for them than they do for our own vision. The shape of their nose can also affect their field of vision.


Dogs can see more than black and white.
Dog's View
Human's View

TRAINING

IT'S CHECK-IN TIME!

Q Have you any advice on how to get my dog to respond to me when out on a walk? He used to be very good at this, but he's now 12 years old and I have noticed he seems to have become much more unresponsive in the last year or so. I had him checked over by my vet, but there don't appear to be any health issues. How can I reignite his interest in me?

Lesley Martin, Devon.

TONY SAYS: Firstly, ensure you are not over-walking your senior dog. Aches and pains can make a dog appear unresponsive. Dogs love a good sniff, and exploring the outside environment is one of the highlights of their day. When we walk our dogs, we are always competing for attention with the environment and distractions, such as other dogs and people. As the dog's owner, we can become over-familiar and much less interesting, hence a lack of engagement.

So, to put the odds back on your side, you need something your dog really likes. Carry some tasty food (small pieces of low-fat cheese or chicken) in a treat bag. When you are out for a walk, simply stop and wait. Be very nonchalant. You are waiting for your dog to stop and check in with you. When he gives you eye contact, provide lots of praise and hand him a small piece of the food. This is training. He is now pairing up looking at you with something wonderful. Once he starts randomly checking in, build on it, step backwards, and beckon him in for the treat or ask for a sit. When the behaviour is happening frequently, you can be more random with the food rewards.

Many owners carry some of their dog's (dry) breakfast on walks. The dog gets fed some of it for acknowledging and responding to his owner. To make it even more fun, you can toss the food into the grass to get him to use that fabulous nose he has. It's a win/win. This 'capturing' method, where you wait for the dog to offer eye contact and check in, can take time to build, so stick with it and it will pay off.

But if you are still concerned, go back to your vet.

Right: Make walking more fun for your dog and more productive for you by encouraging him to check in for a yummy treat.

HEALTH

GRASS GRAZERS

Q Why does my dog eat grass and what does it mean? Could it be a sign of illness?

Dylan Frost, Leicestershire.

VICKY SAYS: Dogs sometimes eat grass to induce vomiting, but after years of watching my dogs select specific grasses at certain times of year, when they are perfectly well, I can only assume some grasses taste good!

Right: Many dogs seem to enjoy grass because it tastes good.

HEALTH

A TASTE FOR CAT POO!

Q Why does my dog eat cat poo all the time but not dog poo? He shows no interest in dog faeces at all but will go mad searching for cat poo if he gets the scent.

Fiona Layton, Greater Manchester.

VICKY SAYS: Dogs evolved as poo-eating scavengers. Cat food is usually higher in fat and protein than dog food and some of these nutrients are passed in the faeces making them a more tempting snack for dogs than dog droppings.

Right top: Introduce some 'buffer time' — pause for a while and maybe sit down before starting your walk.

TRAINING

THE CHAIN OF CHAOS

Q My Labrador is hyperactive and very excitable, particularly when going for a walk. Can you give me any advice on how to calm him down before a walk?

Shaun O'Connor, County Durham.

TONY SAYS: This is quite a common issue. Walks are so much fun that soon, the mere sight of you putting on your coat triggers the anticipation. Picking up the lead is an even more significant trigger! The whole chain of events builds into a chaotic walk when really it should be a relatively calm and controlled mutual activity.

We tend to rush these things, and dogs are even quicker than we are; consequently, neither man nor dog has an opportunity to take a breath. You can interrupt the chain of chaos by introducing what I call 'buffer time'. These are moments of calm and stillness, when for example, you put on your walking shoes and coat and pause for a minute or two, maybe even sit down. Take a few deep breaths and clip on the lead, then stand still for a while. Ideally, leave the house when your dog is calmer. You can do the same after shutting the front door; stop and breathe. Carry on when the dog is less excited and acknowledges you are there. 'Buffer time' interrupts the craziness.

During the walk, change your route, and don't be predictable. Occasionally, do an about-turn and walk back the way you came. This keeps your dog guessing rather than charging ahead on a predictable journey. Soon your dog learns that the world isn't about moving at a million miles an hour, and he only sets off for a walk when he's calm (or calmer). Walks begin to slowly improve.

HEALTH

WINTER BLUES

Q My dog seemed really down over the winter. Can dogs get seasonal affective disorder (SAD)?

Lydia Monkton, Staffordshire.

VICKY SAYS: I am not aware of any specific research on SAD in dogs, but they can certainly pick up on our moods, or be less happy due to a boring winter routine of short walks in the dark. Older dogs may also suffer more from joint pain in cold, wet weather leading to them sleeping more and being less active on walks.

Right: Dogs can often pick up on their owners' moods.

Right: Your dog's annual vet check should include listening to his heart and lungs.

HEALTH

CHECK-UP CHECKLIST

Q What should I expect the vet to do, apart from my dog's booster vaccination, when I take him in for his annual check-up?

Moira Harrabin, North Yorkshire.

VICKY SAYS: Your vet should do a full physical check from nose to tail and listen to the heart and lungs with a stethoscope. Your vet may also look at the eyes with an ophthalmoscope, especially in an older dog, and should scan your dog's microchip and check your details are up-to-date. This is also a good time to discuss parasite control and any health issues you are worried about.

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BEHAVIOUR

WHAT IS HE TRYING TO TELL ME?

Q I've read that growling isn't just your dog behaving aggressively; in fact there are many different types of growl all with different meanings. Can you tell me more?

Alan Cutteridge, Surrey.

TAMSIN SAYS: Growling commonly communicates that a dog is becoming increasingly uncomfortable with whatever's happening at that particular moment, such as worrying about what something or someone might do next, or because they're experiencing physical pain (a vet should always rule out pain/physical discomfort). This is a dog's way of saying: 'I'm not happy about this situation.' You can therefore take immediate action to help him feel safer, for example by encouraging him away from something he's worried about or by moving it away from him, or by preventing anyone from interacting with him, or leaving him alone ourselves.

Just as you might exclaim loudly in exasperation, growling can also express frustration, for example when something doesn't happen as expected. Dogs might also growl during play, especially if this is physically strenuous. Some might also give a little modified growl/groan when being scratched/fussed in a body area they're unable to reach very well themselves, like the pleasure of having an itch relieved.

Context and body language when growling, are key! For example, playful growling with relaxed movement is very different from fearful growling, with stiff body, ears pinned back, and tail tucked beneath, at a stranger who appears unexpectedly.

Never scold a dog for growling because he might learn there's no point in growling when he's worried, because you don't listen and just get cross. Next time he's worried, he might feel he needs to communicate this by snapping instead!

Above right: Growling is a dog's way of saying he is uncomfortable with a certain situation.

TRAINING

WHICH BREED'S BEST?

Q As a dog trainer with experience of many different breeds, do you consider certain breeds to be more trainable than others and, if so, which ones? My husband and I are planning on getting a puppy. We haven't decided on which breed yet, but would like one that is easy to train as we have never had a dog before.

Margaret Vine, Fife.

Right: Border Collies are often hard working and good at problem solving.

TONY SAYS: All dogs are trainable but you must also consider their job roles, which relate to their motivation. Dogs were bred for a purpose, and most still hold that drive. For example, a Labrador was bred to collect quarry, often in the water. Consequently, a Lab enjoys picking things up and usually swimming. Huskies were bred to pull sledges, so they are often at the end of a dog lead and perhaps more distant. Terriers were bred to dig and hunt small furry things. However, these breeds will all learn for a food reward.

A Cavalier King Charles Spaniel is a relatively easy pet dog for those who haven't had a dog before. This is because they were bred specifically for companionship, and in the past, to keep ladies' laps warm.

I recommend researching the breed-type first. You can choose which breed will fit in with your lifestyle, as exercise and stimulation must be considered. For example, a Border Collie requires a large amount of stimulation because these dogs are bred to work hard and are problem solvers (getting sheep through a gate). You can then speak to a registered breeder and take it from there. Good luck with your choice.

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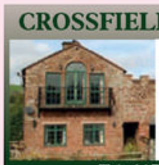

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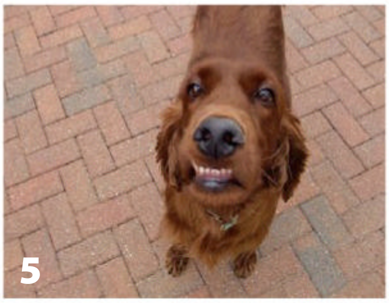

1. Braque du Bourbonnais Bramble, from Edinburgh.

2. Miniature Goldendoodle Walter, from Leicester.

3. Chocolate Labrador Walt, from Sleaford, Lincolnshire.

4. Pug Super Mario, from Seaton Sluice, Northumberland.

5. Irish Setter Guinness, from King's Lynn, Norfolk.

6

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6. Labradoodle Pepper, from Farnborough, Hampshire.

7. Shih Tzu Simba-Rose, Lhasa Apso Sacha, and Chihuahua Dolly, from Stourbridge, West Midlands.

8. Dalmatian Angus, from Monmouth, Gwent.

9. Border Terrier Haggis, from Irvine, North Ayrshire.
Image: Cain9Photography.

10. Maltese X Yorkshire Terrier Dash, from Grantham, Lincolnshire.

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